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ABSTRACT

This document, a companion report to a detailed investigation into school districts' teacher selection processes, presents detailed case studies conducted in six different school districts: (1) Mesa Unified School District (Arizona); (2) Montgomery County Public Schools (Maryland); (3) East Williston Union Free School District (New York); (4) Hillsborough County Public Schools (Florida); (5) City School District of Rochester (New York); and (6) Durham County School System (North Carolina). Each case study contains information regarding the geographical area, demographic characteristics, and general make-up or organization of the school district, the policy context, the teacher selection process, and factors that influence the shaping and implementation of policies and practices within the district. (CB)

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Effective Teacher Selection: From Recruitment to Retention--Case Studies

Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond,
David Berliner, Emil Haller, Phillip Schlechty,
Barnett Berry, Amy Praskac, George Noblit

January 1987

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Center for the Study of
the Teaching Profession

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PREFACE

This Note is directed at two audiences. It should be of interest to school districts that will soon be seeking large numbers of new teachers. As a result, many school districts will want to improve their recruitment, screening, hiring, placement, induction, and evaluation procedures. It should also be of interest to those who wish to understand the effects of teacher selection practices. These practices, like most public policy practices, have both intended and unintended consequences. An effective teacher selection system is one that results in the hiring and retention of the kind of teacher the district values rather than the kind of teacher who merely happens by and stays.

The full study is described in a companion report, *Effective Teacher Selection: From Recruitment to Retention*, R-3462-NIE/CSTP, January 1987. It was sponsored by the National Institute of Education (now the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education). The preparation of the report was supported by RAND's Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession, which in 1986 received grants from the James S. McDonnell Foundation, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Metropolitan Life Foundation, and the Aetna Life and Casualty Foundation, Inc.

This study is the product of the efforts of a team of researchers from The RAND Corporation and elsewhere. The case studies upon which the study rests were conducted by eight researchers. David C. Berliner studied the Mesa, Arizona, schools; Linda Darling-Hammond, Arthur E. Wise, Barnett Berry, and Amy Praskac, the Montgomery County, Maryland, schools; Arthur E. Wise, the East Williston, New York, schools; Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Amy Praskac, the Hillsborough County schools; Emil G. Haller, the Rochester, New York, schools; and Phillip C. Schlechty and George W. Noblit, the Durham County schools. The work was enriched by the varied perspectives brought to each of the case studies.

The case studies are detailed in the present Note. The task of synthesizing and analyzing them and developing conclusions and recommendations fell to Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Barnett Berry.

The six districts studied were selected with the assistance of a panel representing most of the major education associations. The members (and their then current affiliations) were: Dr. Herman Behling, Maryland State Department of Education; Dr. Herman Goldberg, American Association of School Administrators; Ms. Joanne Goldsmith, National Association of State Boards of Education; Dr. James Keefe, The National Association of Secondary School Principals; Dr. Willie J. Kimmons, University of the District of Columbia; Ms. Lucille Maurer, Delegate, State of Maryland; Dr. Bernard McKenna, National Education Association; Dr. James Mecklenburger, National School Boards Association; Ms. Margaret Montgomery, National Association of Elementary School Principals; Dr. William Pierce, Council of Chief State School Officers; and Ms. Marilyn Rauth, American Federation of Teachers. The districts chosen for case studies had highly developed selection practices or paid particular attention to their selection of teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge with appreciation the hundreds of administrators and teachers interviewed in the six districts. Without their willingness to allow us into the districts and their further willingness to share perceptions candidly, this study would not have been possible. We came away with a powerful respect for the complexity of the forces that must be reconciled by personnel officials. As analysts, we can deal with the forces one at a time; administrators do not have that luxury.

Gary Sykes, then of NIE, was the Project Officer responsible for the inception of this study; James Steffensen then took over and sensitively monitored the study to its completion and his retirement, after years of dedicated federal service.

The report profited from the review and critiques provided by colleagues Paul Hill of RAND and Kevin Ryan of Boston University. We owe a continuing debt to Shirley Lithgow, who typed and typed again, and to Nancy Rizor, who typed and provided research assistance.

The senior authors, although they would prefer to share the blame for errors with all those involved in this project, reluctantly accept it all themselves.

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Case Study 1

TEACHER SELECTION IN THE MESA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

David C. Berliner

THE CITY

Mesa, Arizona, located about 15 miles east of Phoenix, is the third largest city in Arizona. Mesa's population, now about 218,000, has been growing at about 10 percent a year and is expected to continue to grow rapidly.

Mesa's population is almost 90 percent white. About 9 percent of the population is Mexican-American, another 1 percent of the population is black, and under 1 percent are of Native-American background. Mesa's population is also, largely, middle-class. It has a large Mormon population and a major Mormon temple is located in the heart of the city.

In Mesa, unemployment is low (3.4 percent) and median income is high ($29,100). Over one-quarter of the households earn $35,000 or more per year. The two largest employers in Mesa are Motorola, a producer of integrated circuits, and the Mesa Unified School District. Each employs about 5,000 people. Among the 10 primary attractions described by the Chamber of Commerce to industries that are considering moving to Mesa is the "nationally renowned public school and community college systems."

THE MESA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Mesa Unified School District has 34 elementary schools (enrollment of 23,889), eight junior high schools (enrollment of 9,758), and five high schools, of which one is vocational (enrollment of 9,650). There are also four schools for children with special needs (total enrollment of 400). A new elementary and a new junior high school were scheduled to open in 1985. From 1974-75 to 1984-85, enrollment increased by about 18,000 and from 1984-85 to 1989-90, enrollment is expected to increase by 11,000 or more. The student teacher ratio in Mesa schools averages 16:1 in grades K-3, 30:1 in grades 4-6, 28:1 in grades 7-9, and 26:1 in grades 10-12. Per-pupil expenditures vary from $2,629 to $3,341, depending on the school and the category of student. The age of teachers in each school also affects per-pupil expenditure.

Private schools (including parochial) are almost nonexistent, primarily because of the high regard in which the public schools are held. As stated above, Mesa has a large and old established Mormon community. Unlike Orthodox Jews, Catholics, and Protestant fundamentalists, Mormons have never made much use of private parochial schools to promote their religious and moral beliefs. Perhaps this also is a reason so few private schools exist.

The 2,500 members of the Mesa class of 1984 were offered over $4.6 million in scholarships. On the California Achievement Tests, taken every spring, Mesa students score above national and state averages in reading, grammar, and mathematics at every grade level. American College Testing (ACT) Program scores, for the twelfth consecutive year, show Mesa high school students above state and national norms.

Beyond what the Southwest has to offer most people--sunshine, sports, western life-style, economic growth, and population growth--Mesa has some special attractions for teachers. In 1984-85, teacher salaries ranged from $16,000 (B.A. with no experience) to $33,299 (Ph.D. with 14 years experience). In addition, the district's employee benefits include life, disability, and dental insurance as well as the usual retirement and leave policies found in most school systems.

There are other attractions for teachers in Mesa. First, there is a history of community support for the schools, evidenced by voter approval of $218 million in school bonds over the last 15 years. Second, the district also has its own very large and active staff development programs. Third, there is easy access to a major university (Arizona State University, with enrollment of about 35,000) so that there is the opportunity for advanced graduate work in education or related fields. Fourth, home prices in Mesa are very moderate by national standards, enabling teachers to buy new homes or condominiums.

In addition, the district has had consistent leadership for some time. The 1983 resignation of the previous superintendent came after he had served 17 years in that position (the national average term of longevity in the superintendency is less than one-quarter of that). The new superintendent served in the Mesa Central Office administration for a number of years and knows the district well. Not only was he a site administrator and teacher in the district but he was also a student in and a graduate of the Mesa public schools. Although changes clearly occur in this well respected school district, one informant felt compelled to note that "continuity and stability, not change or fadism, is the prevailing ethos."

POLICY CONTEXT

Characterizing the community that this school system serves, administrators focused on such things as a demand for quality from its schools by the public; the fact that the public is highly involved with schooling; and that the public is very supportive, as evidenced by recent bonding issues. The respondents also point out quite quickly that it is a stable, mostly white, solid middle-class community. They do not say, but they do imply, that they have none of the problems associated with mobile, non-white, lower-class communities.

There was a good deal of talk by the administrators about the future of Mesa's children. The community is perceived as wanting its children to be able to work--to "make a good living." Although college is seen as important, the importance is really functional. College is probably necessary to get a "good job." That is why college is important. The good job is the overwhelming goal of education. The arts program, though well supported, and the advanced placement program, though well supported, are, apparently, subservient to the dominant goal of the schools: To make Mesa's youth employable. A "quality" education (a term repeated a great deal) is what the community expects and believes it is getting. Unlike many other districts, budget was not mentioned except where it related to issues of growth. There is no sense that the pedagogical needs of the district are underfunded, though fiscal problems abound as a result of growth. The continued expansion of the district, the redrawing of school lines, the ever spiraling costs of physical plant, etc., are the issues the community cares about, but always within a context of genuine respect by the community for its schools.

As in every large district there are differences in community goals and views of education that lead to diverse definitions of good schools and good teaching. There is a vocal and sufficiently persuasive group of parents who launched a "back-to-basics" movement. They are politically active though not numerically large and have received for their efforts a "basics" school. The "basics" school is a thoroughly academic elementary school with firm homework policies, to which neighborhood parents can send their children and so can any other parents if they will provide their own transportation. These parental concerns about curriculum take place within a district that has never departed drastically from the basics. Mesa is a community with traditional values and its schools have continually reflected those values. The "basics" group is seeking expansion in Mesa. Others interested in education are fighting this movement. On this and every other issue the usual assortment of diverse opinions show up in front of the school board. Both the far right and the far left speak out occasionally. But the fact that diverse opinions exist should not distort the overall picture. Differences of opinion about schooling are at a minimum in Mesa.

Four issues seem to have been highly visible and occasionally contentious over the past year or so. First was the founding of the "basic" school and the more current discussion of its expansion. Related to that issue is the policy of grading. Parents are taking different sides on the issue of how the district should grade students. Third, there is the issue of changing school boundaries, a traumatic event for parents and children and a regularly occurring event in a growing (or a shrinking) school district. Finally, there has been the recent controversy over the teaching of controversial issues.

Mesa resembles many other American suburban communities in that constant pressure is exerted on schools "to be a certain kind of school." The only unique aspects of Mesa as it deals with this very American phenomenon is a result of its large Mormon and Midwestern-raised population. This fact, apparently, results in two things: It makes the schools more conservative than might otherwise by the case, thus change comes slowly. And there is broad based public respect for the public schools and for teachers, giving rise to an attitude that the successful professional people who are running the schools know best. Therefore, Mesa is unlikely to be a place where large numbers of people try to change the schools and its school system is not likely to be one that tries new things all the time, responding to contemporary politics or educational fads.

Any dissatisfaction that exists seems to be held by some who want more basics. Because the schools appear now to be both successful and basics-oriented, it is hard to tell what this group wants to accomplish. It should also be noted that because the district emphasizes the academic basic skills, a second group of dissatisfied parents has formed. These people are dissatisfied with the size of the humanities and fine arts programs that are offered.

It was apparent that the community of Mesa is highly satisfied with its public schools. The local community has provided all the tax support for the schools that it has been asked to provide over the last 20 or so years. Mesa's salary schedule, for example, reflects the citizen's support by being at or near the top of the scale in comparison with similar districts. Mesa's schools are recognized in the region as having a great deal of community support. Thus, many people chose it as a district to work in. It makes recruiting and retention of teachers easier than in some other districts.

From many sources, it appears that the citizenry of Mesa think that their schools and teachers are of very high quality. Public opinion nationwide has questioned the instructional competency of teachers in America, and Mesa has reacted to that. The district changed the Mesa Educator Perceiver Interview used in the selection of teachers to reflect the national and local concern about instructional quality. This year, for the first time, teachers will be screened by the Mesa interviewers on their knowledge of instructional techniques. The basic instructional model that formed the background to the series of interview questions about instruction is derived from Madelaine Hunter. Her ideas are the basis of hundreds of statewide and local school district inservice training programs. However, Mesa is probably one of the first districts in the nation to use questions derived from Hunter's ideas as part of the formal screening of teachers seeking employment.

For Mesa, this new emphasis on instruction in the selection of teachers comes more from public interest in the issue than public pressure to do something about it.

The main educational goals of this school system and the school system's philosophy of education are forthright and common. Mesa is committed to a good basic education and it defines that broadly. It tries to meet the individual needs of students and tries to keep quality high. Its music program is the strongest in the state. Its fine arts program is exceptional. It runs a vocational/technical school as well. These programs and schools exist and are supported because of the belief by the district's leaders--administrators and parents--that a *total* program of high quality instruction must be offered.

The district's educational philosophy and goals affect the selection process for teachers. Because Mesa has a commitment to a total program (the word *total* is used a lot when discussing curriculum philosophy), interviewers must always be looking for special talents in music, sports, hobbies, etc. The greater the diversity of talent and the willingness to use it, the easier it is for an academically qualified candidate to get a job in Mesa--other things being equal.

The school board has not been concerned about defining goals or processes for teacher selection. They are, apparently, content with the present process. In addition, the local teachers' organization has not been involved in the selection process. The local teachers' organization is an NEA (National Education Association) affiliate, a member of the Arizona State teachers' group--the AEA. It is considered to be strong, vocal, and very cooperative. Employer-employee relationships have not been adversarial. The Mesa Education Association "has not structured itself as a union, but as a professional association." It is "active but not hostile."

The respondents were asked to describe their district selection policy and procedures as either highly centralized, with the Central Office controlling most decisions, or decentralized, with efforts made to delegate decisions to the school level. Virtually all respondents agreed that the Mesa system was some of both--centralized and decentralized. The Central Office screens candidates. It acts as gatekeeper for the district. It determines who will and will not be in the pool.

However, many local site administrators are interviewers. Therefore, the personnel at the schools feel that more than Central Office staff participate in the gatekeeping function. The decentralized part of the selection process occurs because the site administrators get to choose about five candidates to interview from a pool of 10-15. They then select one of those five for employment. Thus, local autonomy in decisionmaking is preserved. Despite the near unanimity of belief, from an outsider's perspective, the system did not look to be very decentralized at all. Imagine being given a choice, at dinner, of hot dogs or hamburgers. On the one hand, you have a choice. On the other hand, someone has already made the major decision--what will be served.

Although many of the participants believe the system is partly decentralized, it is doubtful if that is a supportable belief. It is probably the admiration of the participants in the selection process toward the pool of candidates they are presented with that allows this fiction to exist. There was absolutely no evidence given by administrators that the selection system had major faults. Their contentment with the system and the fact that they do have the authority to choose the candidates they want at the site have made them unconcerned about the severe limitations placed on their choices by the Central Office staff and policies. When this analysis was presented to one administrator he replied, "Maybe you're right, but who cares, it works OK and I've got enough other things to worry about."

Respondents were also questioned about whether other personnel decisions (e.g., hiring and transfers) were handled in a centralized or decentralized fashion. Again, respondents felt that the district is a "middle of the road" district on the issue of centralized or decentralized decisionmaking. Hiring decisions are the sites' responsibility, though they must draw from the pool of candidates selected by the Central Office. The Central Office will not enter into into the process again *unless* they do not like the choice that is made. The ASFP feels that he exercises quality control for the district; thus he feels it is his responsibility to challenge and inquire about decisions he does not approve of at first glance. Such instances are infrequent but they do occur in a district hiring 200-300 teachers per year. The site administrator and ASFP negotiate the disagreement and only very rarely is there a need to go higher in the system to adjudicate a dispute.

Firm rules for transfers exist. Teachers within the district have first rights to new positions. Thus, at the end of each year site administrators interview people within the district who want to transfer. The Central Office coordinates the listing of jobs and the requests for transfer. The local site administrator has some power over whom he or she will hire, but clearly there is a system run by regulations and agreements giving transferring teachers some advantage when competing for a vacancy at another site. Transfers within this district seem to be at a high rate. This is partly due to the size of the district. A teacher entering the Mesa school system is likely to get a job at a new school in the outlying areas--far east of the center of town. After gaining tenure and establishing personal contacts with other teachers, many teachers choose to move to the central area, which is closer to Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, and the university.

In addition, the personnel office is not involved in the areas of evaluation and staff development. Teachers are evaluated by the unit administrator (the principal or a department head) who uses forms and procedures agreed upon with and distributed by the central administration. Only a unit administrator could recommend dismissal of a teacher, for example, indicating that some power is certainly decentralized.

The district philosophy is that the unit administrators are "responsible for the growth and development of the teachers in his or her charge." However, the district has an extensive centralized staff development office to accomplish district level, general, staff development activities. The Mesa schools have a Director for Planning, Staff Development, and Special Projects who oversees two mandatory staff development programs for newly hired teachers (regardless of previous experience), and other staff development activities, which are open to all Mesa teachers. Although Mesa personnel generally characterize evaluation and staff development as partly centralized and partly decentralized, it is less apparent in the case of staff development than in the case of evaluation. Staff development, at least in its more formal versions (courses, certificates of competence, requirements for granting of tenure, etc.) appears to be quite centralized.

In the interviews, questions were asked about how the different divisions in the district--e.g., personnel, research and evaluation, and curriculum and instruction--interact with each other in designing or implementing the teacher selection process or in gauging its effects. What was revealed was that the internal district involvement with selection has been minimal. The research and evaluation unit is uninvolved. The curriculum people get involved only as interviewers. Thus, the directors of science, social studies, and vocational education, for example, are all trained interviewers with the SRI-Ventures-Mesa Educator Perceiver Interview schedule. In general, selection is the problem of the ASFP.

The state's requirements for teacher education affect the district's selection process only minimally. Arizona requires the Arizona Teacher Proficiency Exam, a basic competency test assessing reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition, the state requires, for all levels of teaching, two reading courses--a decoding course and a practicum in reading. Most out-of-state candidates can pass the proficiency test. The quality of the Mesa pool of candidates is quite high and the test really is designed to be a minimum competency type of examination. But most out-of-state elementary school teachers also do not have to attend two reading courses. The state law also requires coursework or demonstrated knowledge of the Arizona Constitution. These requirements apparently do *not* seriously affect the pool in either quality or quantity. A lack of these requirements poses no hindrance to being hired. All requirements can be met in only one year by new out-of-state teachers.

There are no federal or state mandates for hiring in effect in the Mesa schools. For the foreseeable future, no lawsuits are likely. The national events, however, have made the Mesa schools more aware of three affirmative action policies. The district perceives itself as needing to attract more Hispanic teachers and more Native-American teachers (a scarce pool), and to be more cognizant in all it does about the handicapped--including hiring.

THE TEACHER SELECTION PROCESS

The district employs an Assistant Superintendent for Personnel (ASFP). His is a full-service personnel office involved in "the attraction, selection, and retention of quality teachers." The ASFP has held his position for over a dozen years. When he first accepted this assignment, all the school site administrators were required to help the personnel department screen candidates for teaching positions in the district. Each principal would contribute one or two days to the screening process. The ASFP felt that each school principal had a different idea as to what was desirable for the district--one wanted a permissive teacher, one wanted a highly structured person, another sought brilliant minds, someone else insisted on hiring people of more ordinary talents. Little planning took place. Interviews would last 20-30 minutes. The interviews developed quite idiosyncratically as the interview progressed. Without any district consensus about what was desirable, the candidate's and the principal's "style," not the substance of the interview, influenced the selection process enormously. One site administrator reported that until the hiring of the ASFP the personnel office was very chaotic. The job was considered informal and part-time. Thus, the previous director held other Central Office jobs simultaneously. Candidates for jobs "wandered" in and made applications. Principals "wandered" in to dig out files and they would simply call up people they thought looked good. The site administrators generally hired whomever they wanted.

Shortly after taking his assignment, the ASFP was searching for a better way to handle the selection process. His search brought him into contact with the Selection Research Institute, a Nebraska personnel selection and management consulting company that had developed a Teacher Perceiver Interview schedule, a standardized interview procedure for gaining useful information about prospective classroom teachers. The ASFP attended a workshop on the use of the instrument in January 1973. While there, he met Dr. Victor Cottrell, the director of and one of the original members of the Selection Research Institute's training team responsible for the training and certifying of individuals to administer and then score responses to the Teacher Perceiver Interview. The instrument was first used in Mesa during the 1973-74 academic year. Since then, in one modified version or another, the instrument has been used systematically by the personnel department for screening prospective teachers. The version of the instrument in use the last few years has been the Mesa Educator Perceiver Interview (MEPI), developed by an educational consulting firm called Ventures for Excellence, headed by Dr. Cottrell.[1] The current instrument, in substantive content, format, philosophy, and method of administration, resembles the original instruments.

Virtually no teachers who have done poorly in the interview are considered for employment by anyone in the district. The personnel office is generally very pleased with the instrument. Personnel there feel that the instrument helps the office to accomplish its goal: To screen candidates for employment. Although the personnel department handles dozens of important jobs--recruiting applicants, issuing contracts, keeping records of benefits, etc.--it sees its major role as gatekeeper for the district, screening applicants to choose those teachers worth further consideration by the district.

Steps in the Selection Process

Interviews with employees of the Mesa public schools revealed a great deal of agreement about how a candidate gets a job as a teacher in Mesa.

Step 1 is to request an application form. The form can be picked up or requested by mail or phone. The application forms are also available at educational placement offices in colleges and universities or are given to prospective employees at those offices where Mesa recruiters visit. The submission of a completed application starts an employment file.

Step 2 is to complete the file for a prospective employee. To get into the pool of candidates that might be considered by the district, a complete file is required. A complete file consists of the application, letters of recommendation (generally three), college transcripts or acceptable records of education and credit hours, and the record of the candidate's responses to the MEPI. All candidates have to go through the MEPI screening interview. If the candidates are not from the Mesa region, they either must visit Mesa to be formally interviewed or they must visit a site where interviewers from Mesa might be, such as a university placement office where a Mesa recruiter might be in residence for a few days.

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[1] Development of this instrument is described in more detail in the next subsection.

Step 3 is to check the file and rate the candidate. The ASFP reviews each file, checks references and credentials, and determines which of four categories to assign to an individual. This vests a great deal of authority in the ASFP. As will be noted below, most principals feel this authority is used wisely. Nevertheless, this rating is based on one person's subjective judgments. Category I includes applicants who are highly recommended for employment. Category II includes applicants who are conditionally recommended--that is, if a shortage in a teaching area or grade occurred, these individuals *might* be acceptable, but their papers and interview performance make them marginal candidates. Category IV includes those whom the ASFP finds not acceptable for the Mesa public schools. Each applicant folder for candidates in Categories I through III goes to the file room--a storage room for files containing full information about every acceptable candidate still seeking employment in the district.

Step 4 begins when a school principal needs or soon will need a teacher. Perhaps enrollment projections suggest the need for another teacher the following year. Perhaps a new class must be created at the school because newly enrolled students entering after the start of the year raised class size beyond levels negotiated with the teachers association. Perhaps a teacher leaves after the start of the school year as a result of illness or other personal reasons. Whatever the reason, a principal's request for a teacher triggers a search of the files in the active file room by the personnel office. That office prepares a set of 10 to 15 files for the principal. From these, the principal will generally select about five teachers to interview.

Step 5 is to conduct the site interview. The usual interview includes the principal and teachers who might have the most contact with the candidate (e.g., the department chair or the other teachers at a particular grade level). Sometimes the timing involved in hiring prevents this. Many teachers are hired over the summer when only the administrator may be available. Out-of-area candidates must be willing to travel to Mesa at their own expense. Local candidates are occasionally asked to return for a second interview. The personnel office wants each site administrator to interview around five candidates for each position that is open. Even when the first interview generates great enthusiasm by the principal to hire the candidate immediately, the personnel office puts pressure on the site administrator to interview three or more others to be sure comparisons between candidates can be made.

In step 6, the principal recommends a candidate for employment to the personnel office. The ASFP is the only person in the district with authority to make a job offer. With school board approval to hire for certain positions in hand, and with the salary and benefit schedule as a guide, the ASFP can make a formal job offer to the candidate selected by the site administrator.

It should be noted that this procedure works well for this district because, at most times of the year there is a large pool of qualified applicants from which to drawn, and because candidates for teaching positions view Mesa as a desirable district. At certain other times of the year (e.g., in November or the week schools open when there might be a need for a score of new teachers), the pool of applicants is smaller and contains more candidates from Category III. As the competition for qualified teachers increases nationwide over the next decade, some difficulties may develop in maintaining a large enough pool of applicants to maintain the quality the district desires.

The personnel office is quite clear about its role in teacher selection. Its responsibility is to screen prospective candidates, not to select them. The site administrators in the district believe that this division is an appropriate one and they therefore feel little threat to their administrative rights and authority. They accept the centralized role of the personnel office in screening, whereby the ASFP determines the trustworthiness of the applicant's credentials, the personal worth of the candidate as a human being, his or her commitment as a professional educator, his or her likelihood of being a motivated, caring person, and the probability that he or she will have ideas and plans for interacting with students in productive ways. Many of these characteristics are inferred from the responses to the MEPI and from letters of recommendation. The MEPI responses are the primary source material from which the ASFP makes his judgments. As will be discussed below, the MEPI scores weigh heavily in the assignment of a candidate to Categories I-IV.

Past experience has been very positive. Thus, when the site administrators get 10 or more files to look at, they feel very confident that the ASFP has performed his job well. The site administrators reserve for themselves the right to determine the technical competency of the teacher and to estimate the likelihood that the candidate will fit well with the other professionals at the site. They see the Central Office screening role as general; they see their own role as specific--determining the "precise" technical skills and personal qualities that would fit their site. Although there seems to be a good deal of agreement about how the roles of the ASFP and the principals are complementary, from an outsider's standpoint it appears that the ASFP has virtually all the power, and that the MEPI may play a more important role in hiring decisions than it may warrant.

However, there is a good deal of faith in the MEPI as a positive force for selecting quality teachers. That faith runs deep in this district. The instrument plays a dominant role in fulfilling the gatekeeping function of the personnel office of this district. Therefore, the MEPI needs to be looked at in more detail.

The Mesa Educator Perceiver Interview

The first versions of this instrument were developed in the 1960s in Nebraska. Professor William Hall of the University of Nebraska was attempting, like many researchers today, to deduce the common denominator of teachers judged to be effective. His criteria for determining teacher effectiveness are unclear, but the behaviors he believed to distinguish effective from less effective teachers all share a common conceptual thread. They are all related to human interactions, intentions, motivation, attitudes about children, commitment to teaching, and the like. That is, the variables he focused on were affective in nature. The variables of interest to Hall must have been very compatible with the variables of interest to educators at that time. The sixties saw a host of articles and books criticizing schools for their lack of affective responses to children.

Hall's ideas served as the basis for a teacher selection instrument, brought to commercial development by Selection Research Institute (SRI).

From the early 1970s, the SRI Teacher Perceiver Interview has enjoyed popularity in a number of school districts. From 1972 on, Teacher Perceiver Academies have been developed to train interviewers at the local district level. Thousands of school people have been trained and certified in the use of this standardized interview procedure. For five years, Victor A. Cottrell, Ed.D., was executive director of those training academies and was directly responsible for promulgating the SRI Teacher Perceiver Interview throughout the United States.

Dr. Cottrell left SRI in 1978 and founded his own educational consulting firm, Ventures for Excellence. The instrument that is promoted for selecting teachers by Ventures for Excellence is linked directly to, though is not identical to, the original SRI Teacher Perceiver Interview. According to Dr. Cottrell, the older SRI interview schedule and the new Ventures for Excellence teacher interview schedule are in use in 500 to 700 school districts of the approximately 16,000 school districts in the United States. He believes that about 400 districts now use these instruments systematically. He also estimates that a subset of these 400 districts, about 100 districts, like Mesa, invariably required the interview as a part of the selection procedure.

When training interviewers, Dr. Cottrell shares the background associated with the development of the Ventures for Excellence instrument. He claims that for 12 years he has studied, in depth, executives, managers, and educational personnel in all sorts of settings and he is sure that it is possible to predict the skills and behavior a person will show on the job through structured interviews. He claims that the interview schedule he uses has had extensive research and can help administrators select effective teachers. He goes on to say:

> The criterion reference for the Ventures for Excellence Teacher Interview is based upon a conceptualization of an "ideal teacher." The ideal teacher represented in the interview criteria is a composite of teachers studies in fifteen core areas. The fifteen areas were identified after asking hundreds of parents, students, teachers, and administrators to describe in detail the attitudes, skills, and behaviors of the very best teacher they have ever encountered. Once the conceptualization of the ideal teacher was formulated, the questions specifically asked in the interview are highly pragmatic and reflect experiences teachers encounter in their professional lives. As a result, most educational professionals see the interview as very realistic to life experiences of teachers, and in turn represent a high face validity.

A good deal of discussion takes place about the values on which the structured interview is based. According to Dr. Cottrell, the guiding values of the instrument have to do with belief in human worth, belief in the desire of people to acquire knowledge and to engage in lifelong learning, belief in teachers acquiring insight about children, beliefs in human relations, etc. In short, the bedrock from which this instrument springs is virtually everything nice and decent in the world.

Ventures for Excellence provides training on administering the interview and scoring the responses. Audio tapes of the interviewees' responses are required, since analysis of the responses, for scoring, is sometimes very difficult. The audio record allows the interviewer, if he is scoring as he proceeds with the interview, to go back and check on precisely what was said, after the interviewee has gone.

The scoring can also, therefore, be done by experts at Ventures for Excellence or at the Mesa district offices, when the interview itself is conducted by someone with less skill in scoring.

Standard interviewing techniques are taught to all interviewer trainees, including how to put interviewees at ease, to establish rapport, to check the audio tape operation, and to determine what physical conditions to provide. All interviewers are under oath to maintain the confidentiality of the instrument. The training program, costing hundreds of dollars, results in certification as a Ventures for Excellence interviewer.

The usual interview consists of a series of questions--one reflecting each subcategory from which information is desired. If the subcategory was, for example, commitment to the profession, the interviewer might ask a question like "Suppose a fire or tornado destroyed the school you taught in, what would you suggest doing?" Or, if the interviewer wanted some ideas about a teacher's sense of humor, he might ask "What would you do if the whole class started laughing at you for not knowing who Michael Jackson was?" (These two illustrative questions are *not* actual examples of questions in the Ventures for Excellence Teacher Interview schedule. Citing of actual questions would be a violation of the confidentiality agreement.) At that point, a decision is made about whether to continue the interview. Essentially, the interviewer must decide whether or not one more question reflecting each subcategory should be asked to obtain the information needed for classifying an interviewee. If an interviewee has, for two series of questions, been giving answers that are very far from the mark, the interview need not proceed. If an interviewee has given answers of very high quality throughout the first two series, the interview can also be stopped. When there is some doubt, a third full series is given. If, in the opinion of the interviewer, still more data are needed a fourth series of questions is completed. Thus, for every subcategory of interest there are four ostensibly parallel questions that might be asked. The use of a fourth series is comparatively rare. Two series of questions are the mode, with most of the respondents finishing in three. Because the decisions about how many series to initiate are in the hands of the interviewer, that person must be skillful at scoring as the interview progresses.

Although the judgments to be made are very complex, the scoring system for the Ventures for Excellence Teacher Interview is quite simple. Each interviewee's answer is coded "+," "0," or "-," signifying, respectively, an answer close to the kind an excellent teacher might give, an unscorable answer, and an answer *not* characteristic of excellent teachers. The scoring can be done with a guidebook providing examples of +, 0, and - answers. The guidebook contains tips for the interviewer in the form of "Listen fors," phrases, and key ideas. The interview developers regard these phrases as clear + or - verbal statements. For example, in the illustrative question given above, one that supposedly reflects commitment, a teacher is asked what might be done after a tornado hit the school. The ways the interviewee answers might be scored are as follows:

+ "I'd immediately find a place that wasn't damaged to hold my class."
0 "I'd see if everything was all right."
- "I'd take a vacation for a while."

The + response reflects commitment to education, the 0 response reflects nothing that is easily codable, and the - response reflects lack of commitment to the profession. The guidebook might list as "Listen fors":

+	-
Getting back to work	Quitting
Rebuilding	Stopping for a while
Starting up quickly	Vacationing

The illustrative question about a sense of humor noted above--what would you do if students laughed when you said you do not know who Michael Jackson is?--might be scored as follows:

+ "I'd laugh with them too!"
0 "I'd get them on task soon after."
- "I'd tell them it's not polite to laugh at a person's ignorance."

The positive score is given for anything that reflects a person's "good" sense of humor; the neutral sign is given for lack of evidence about a sense of humor, such as in the above example where it is hard to tell the person's underlying general disposition; and the negative sign is given for verbal statements that show no sign of a sense of humor.

As questions derived from each of the subcategories are asked, an interviewee accrues a score on the basis of the *net* number of positive responses that were made. Responses coded 0 do not count in the scoring. Two series of 15 questions each could result in a maximum of 30 points (all positive scores). A set of responses coded as 22 positive, 6 neutral, and 2 negative would yield a net score of 20. An interviewer if satisfied with other factors (interpersonal skills and the fact that the negatively coded responses were not indicative of grave problems) might call the interview to a halt after just two series.

Under the strictest selection procedures, Dr. Cottrell estimates that only 5 percent of interviewees reach the recommended cut-off point for selecting excellent teachers. That cut-off point is set at 50 percent (net) positively scored responses to the questions in the standardized interview. Cut-off scores vary, of course, from district to district and reflect, also, the size and quality of the pool of applicants for teaching positions.

The Mesa Educator Perceiver Interview is different from the Ventures for Excellence Interview Schedule in a number of ways. It contains a total of four categories and has only 13 subcategories from which questions are derived. The first three of the MEPI categories are concerned about the applicant's purpose, responses to human interaction questions, and beliefs about human development. These categories from which questions are derived are identical to the Ventures for Excellence Interview Schedule. The fourth category, added only this year, reflects the district's interest in determining the interviewee's reactions to questions about instructional processes. Mesa, like the nation as a whole, has become more conscious of instructional variables. The district has retained its concern for the affective qualities of teachers but has decided also to add between eight and 16 questions on instructional issues to its screening interview. This instructional category, as developed by Ventures for Excellence and Mesa personnel, is defined as follows:

> INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS. - A teacher with instructional process skills is one who has high level planning and organizational skills yet is able to adapt to the student realities. This person has ways to continue to acquire knowledge and information. Assessing student developmental levels and evaluating progress is a vital part of this teacher's skill base.

A complete interview is usually 26 questions, two series of questions, but can frequently go to 39 questions, if needed. In the past, the Mesa interviewers have had as many as 50 percent of their interviewees achieve a score of 50 percent on the interview schedule. They expect, however, that, with some new questions on the interview schedule, only 30-40 percent of those they interview will reach the score of 50 percent (net) positive responses, with few negative responses or characteristics.

The Mesa interviewers also obtain information about (1) the person's ability in extracurricular areas such as music, art, sports, etc.; (2) their ability to teach in areas other than their certified area; and (3) the grade levels and subjects they prefer to teach. The interviewers can also include additional information, for the record, about each individual. When a candidate is not a high scorer, these comments by the interviewer play an important role.

In the 1983-84 school year, trained personnel from Mesa interviewed 1,248 prospective teachers. Four hundred and fifty of the interviews were given on college campuses during recruitment of novice teachers. Fewer than half of those interviewed were rated as Category I or II.

Selection Policies and Practices

The main goal of the selection process is to find people whose excellence in the human/interactive skills is not in question. This is the reason for the MEPI. The cut-off score of 50 percent "correct" is the hiring standard. Fifty percent (net) on the MEPI will be achieved by approximately 30-50 percent of those interviewed. Not all of those, however, will be hired. Other factors come into play, but the individuals scoring greater than 50 percent (net) will have the highest probability of being selected for an interview by a principal.

At the site interview, the second goal of the selection process becomes salient--technical competence. The principal and some of his or her staff judge the candidate's technical competency from interviews with the prospective teacher at the site. Experience suggests that in some areas, auto mechanics, for example, the MEPI score may be low and technical skills/content knowledge become the primary factors in selection. The hiring standards are not rigid. Demand clearly plays an important role in determining who is hired.

External assessments of a prospective teacher's competence (e.g., school of education assessments, recommendations from previous employers) are all used to make judgments about employability. However, the district generally values the MEPI results as the number one indicator of quality. Letters of recommendation are used by the personnel office as the second choice for information, though many principals do not weight the letters highly, claiming virtually everyone is able to get three people to say something nice about them. The principals, as might be expected, weight the supervising teacher's comments about the novice teacher very highly. In the case of an experienced teacher, the former principal's ratings are the important factor. The principals that will be hiring a candidate weight these sources higher than does the Central Office. The personnel office tries to use everything--they use the MEPI, references, supervisor's comments, grades, and courses--when rating a file. The judgment, however, is a subjective one.

The candidate's grades were irrelevant to the majority of principals. In addition, and perhaps the source of their concern, was that they did not trust the grading practices of schools of education. They said that they had seen too many straight "A" students who did not know much about anything. They seemed more convinced that a low grade was worth considering, since high grades were too easy to get. Furthermore, the records of the courses that were taken are also suspect. These principals did not believe that the course titles necessarily described course content. Thus, grades and transcripts are largely seen as untrustworthy and therefore irrelevant. In general, practice teaching/actual teaching and the MEPI are the major indicators for the principals.

Variation existed, however, with some respondents weighting college grades very highly, but for very different reasons. One principal actually did think only the brightest can and should teach, thus weighting college grades quite highly. Another principal thought that the brightest teachers, as evidenced by grades, do not relate well to children of ordinary or of little ability. His logic is that the brightest teachers cannot fathom the difficulties in learning exhibited by the less able children. Another form of prejudgment about the personality characteristics of the brightest was shown by the principal who said "I want them (candidates) to be average ability. They don't have to be a 4.0 student. I don't think that those necessarily make the best teachers because sometimes their academic life wasn't normal. I think that sometimes if you were so bright you don't have the patience to work with a child who isn't as bright as you were at that level." Another principal disdained interviewing the brightest new teacher candidates because they ordinarily left the profession too quickly.

Some comments on the downgrading of intellectual capacity are in order. It is a rare field where a practitioner would be willing to say "the smarter you are the worse you'll do." Yet in education this belief has vocal supporters. Principals with such beliefs hold the most tenuous logic and have no research evidence with which to defend their beliefs. To an outsider, it sounds bizarre and represents clear discrimination against the hiring of the brightest teachers. Perhaps the real reason for the prejudice against the most bright is to be found in the background and management styles of the principals themselves. As a group, they are not considered by colleges of education to be academically distinguished. It is quite possible that the least bright among them are trying to find ways to keep the brightest teachers out of the schools for fear of a loss of prestige. Some principals also perform their roles using their office as authority for their actions. The last thing such individuals would want is a bright teacher to challenge the wisdom of the principal's decisions. This bias expressed against the brightest is also found in the MEPI. For example, if a prospective teacher were to respond to the MEPI with answers that emphasized the cognitive rather than the affective, a low score would likely result. It is a distinct possibility that at the Central Office and at some principals' offices a double screen is involved that systematically limits the brighest teachers' work prospects.

Discussions were held about how much reliance was placed on each of the various elements in the selection process. In order of weighting, the Mesa schools rely on the MEPI interview first. Letters by supervisors (principals or the supervisors of student teachers) are the second most important factor. General letters of reference (clergymen, physicians, politicians, etc.) are not highly valued, nor are college transcripts. Whether or not there will be a site interview is determined by the above factors. The site interview, of course, becomes crucial then, with prospective teachers ordinarily facing five competitors for each position. This would be the case, for example, when the position is an ordinary one (4th grade teacher rather than metal shop teacher) and the timing is fortuitous for the district (late spring or early summer rather than late November). The candidates' ability to communicate their technical competence, both pedagogy and content knowledge, and their ability to "fit in well" become the big factors in a hiring decision.

In review of the files and in the site interview, all the idiosyncrasies of less formalized systems show up. One principal looks for neatness in filling out the forms, another at consistency in grades ("high or low is not as important as consistency!"). Another reads "between the lines" of letters of recommendation. Another ignores all the candidates' responses to why they want to work in Mesa, "Since all the answers are the same." He chooses, instead, to concentrate on their articulateness and "manner," not their responses to the "give away" questions. The surface appearance of formality and objectivity exists side by side with the more typical elements of a human system of job interviewing, where people hold personal theories of prediction, have some highly idiosyncratic ideas, use "gut feelings," etc.

Apparently, no attempt to validate the selection process has been made, although over the years that has been discussed many times. Besides the costs, two reasons argue against committing resources to study the selection process. First is the belief that there is a "vast" amount of supportive research already done on the MEPI or its variants.

This is not true, but it is, nevertheless, believed. Second is the lack of a criterion for judging if the selection process is working.

This is the same problem that plagues all of research on teaching. Some would argue that principals' ratings are the proper criterion. Others argue that student ratings are the only proper criterion to use in judging effectiveness. Without an acceptable criterion for effective teaching, it is very difficult to validate a selection program. In fact, since the MEPI is designed to cull out a certain type of teacher, one with extraordinary human-relations and interpersonal communication skills, validation of the selection system would require sampling the students' opinions and attitudes about those aspects of a particular teacher. Because of one administrator's faith in the MEPI, he thought "Students would do as well as anyone else" in determining whether the system works.

The most important criterion for choosing a new teacher, at least from the view of the ASFP, is the human interaction category of the MEPI. He wants people in classrooms who have rapport, can listen, are sensitive to children's needs, can show empathy, foster cooperation, etc. The interviewers for the Mesa schools believe most of the other characteristics needed to be a good teacher can be taught. This one--the human interactive skill--cannot be so easily taught. One principal expressed it as "I look for enthusiasm. I look for warmth and caring about children. . . . The other things they can learn."

But criteria differ. Some personal preferences among administrators show up when interviewing. One, for example, takes new teachers only because he has to--he prefers experienced teachers. Another takes as many young, new teachers as she can get: "I love new teachers because they've got freshness and a spark and enthusiasm . . . and are worth the investment you are going to put into them over a few years time."

One administrator believes many of his colleagues prefer to hire people under 30 so they can control them. "Old pros" can be too much of a challenge. Such teachers have too much experience and could challenge authority. Thus, a systematic bias creeps into the system whereby an older principal keeps status by hiring younger teachers who need the older principal's help to master their trade during the first few years and to be recommended for and attain tenure in the district.

Other considerations sometimes are taken into account in hiring a new teacher. In one case, the mean age of the school faculty was very high, they were at the higher end of the salary schedule, and not a single member of that faculty wanted to coach anything. Thus, when the rare new position is opened in this very stable school, it goes to people who can and will coach in some sport, or lead student council, or work in the choral group, etc.

Throughout the selection process, there is a belief in the importance of the personal characteristics of the individual. This belief overrides many other considerations. When asked if the interviewers care about geography, experience, age, institutional training, or the like, the respondents generally said "No. It's the person!" In particular, they felt that no geographic region, college, or training program seems to produce teachers who are any better than those in other regions or institutions. The prestige and exclusivity of different colleges were simply of no value in comparison of candidates. The personal qualifications of the individual mattered more. Because of the aforementioned bias against brightness, it is quite possible that new teachers from Southern Illinois and San Jose State College would hold an advantage over prospective teachers from Stanford and Yale.

During the interviews, questions were asked about whether agreement existed on the most important criteria for selecting new teachers. Most of the time the system seemed to run very smoothly, with little disagreement among those who participate in the selection decisions. Nevertheless, disagreements do occur. One such incident involved a candidate for a teaching position in history. The candidate held a Ph.D. There was a concern by some school faculty that such a person would not remain long in teaching, thus he should not be hired. Others thought that there was no guarantee that anyone will remain in teaching, thus, they should always go for the best they could get.

Another set of disagreements emerge over philosophy. One principal is less concerned about academics and discipline and more concerned about empathy and ability to relate to children. The teachers selected by that principal are different from those selected by another principal. One way these disagreements can show up is when a candidate is ranked highly by the ASFP. The file of that candidate is given to each principal who is looking for a teacher. Two or three principals may find that candidate not very appealing, whereas another principal might enthusiastically take that person on board. The effects of such disagreements are apparently relatively minor. The system functions quite well, except for one particular kind of problem. Since principals can also request a specific candidate's file when choosing whom to interview, they may interview a candidate who is not well thought of by the ASFP, perhaps because of a low MEPI score. If the principal actually chooses that candidate, the ASFP will review the files of all candidates chosen for site interviews to ensure that the best candidate was actually chosen. It is here that the most severe disagreements occur. The principal may want a particular person and the ASFP may question the principal's judgment. For the most part, each recognizes the other party's rights in this situation. They negotiate and most such disputes end there.

Disagreements can occur if the personnel department becomes assertive because it has special candidates it wants to place. This is the other side of the coin. For example, if the personnel office discovers an exceptional candidate, it may make a job offer on the spot, knowing that in the near term it will need a few hundred teachers and not wanting to risk losing, say, an exceptionally able minority or other talented teacher. Then, according to procedures, they have to include the file folder of that individual with others for a principal to look at. Sometimes, the principals simply do not find the candidates selected by the personnel office nearly as superb as the personnel office thought they were. In such cases, the ASFP must "sell" the individual, and some tough negotiations must occur between the AFSP and the principal. Although there probably will always be some tension between principals and the personnel office when the personnel office makes job offers to special individuals, the principals were unanimous in their support of the ASFP for taking such actions. At the same time, they did not want to be told they must be the ones to hire one of those individuals.

When there are differences about hiring decisions, the final decision is usually a negotiated settlement between the ASFP and the principal. The rare dispute that is not negotiated at that level is adjudicated by the superintendent of the district. It should be noted that although disagreements occur, as in all human systems, the general mode of operation in Mesa is harmonious, with a good deal of respect by the principals for the ASFP as a personnel expert and a good deal of respect for the process used in selection of teachers. The most commonly expressed shortcoming about the selection process was the lack of classroom observation. It is both time-consuming and expensive, but "it would be just tremendous, if we had a corps of people who go around and visit applicants." Many principals believe that actually watching some of the candidates, particularly experienced teachers in neighboring districts, would really change things dramatically. Some principals thought that videotapes of teaching would also be very helpful. Some administrators thought that situational tests might be more helpful than just question-answer type interviews.

A questionnaire was used to elicit information about selection procedures from a diverse group of administrators in the Mesa Public Schools. During private conversations usually lasting about one and a half hours, Central Office and school site administrators were asked to describe various aspects of their district and their particular role in and views about the currently used selection procedures. It was quite clear that the district selection procedures were well known, support for the procedures was widespread, the procedures had been in place for some time, and the administrative staff of the district was stable. These circumstances led to a remarkably coherent picture of the selection process in Mesa. It was not at all difficult to learn about the selection procedures--the information is available from a wide range of respondents, all of whom show a high level of consistency in their knowledge.

Implementation of the Selection Process

The basic selection process from the time a vacancy appears until a set of candidates is identified for consideration was described above. In this subsection we describe the issue of internal transfers. Before the files of outside candidates are given to the principals to consider for the position they have, those teachers requesting transfer get first crack at the job. This usually occurs in the spring. No transfers are allowed after July 1. At that time, only new hires are competing for the jobs. Before that time, the teachers already in service have the option of interviewing. Voluntary transfers are interviewed just like other candidates. It is possible, however, for there to be a mandatory transfer. This occurs when a school drops some programs, or there is a curtailment at a certain grade level, or transfers occur such that the students from one school go to another school leaving a tenured teacher with no class. In that case, interviewing takes place at the proposed new school but it is not the deciding factor. The superintendent or associates can "impose" a teacher on a school. It is not done very often, because the Mesa schools are almost always growing. But there have been cases of mandatory transfers resulting from some particular problems within the district. None of the principals like this, though they understand why it happens. Such events undermine their authority to decide who will and will not teach in their particular schools. Fortunately, mandatory transfers are rare events.

Certain kinds of school philosophies are determining factors in the selection of teachers. For example, certain back-to-basics orientations require teachers of one type, and certain affective orientations require teachers of another type. These are school characteristics, usually promulgated by the principal and the key members of the staff at that school. Instructional programs sometimes enter into selection when certain schools are noted for their art or drama programs. Student body composition is not a major factor in selection in this district. The numbers of minorities and poor people are very small and relatively evenly distributed throughout the district. In general, the personnel office strives for diversification of the sexes, experience, ethnicity, and philosophy at each of the schools. The personnel office believes it is better to have a mix of types across schools rather than a concentration in one school. Principals on the other hand often feel exactly the opposite. For the most part, the trend in the Mesa schools is for diversity rather than homogeneity at each site.

All of the principals felt they had the major decisionmaking power. They all recognized that the Central Office is the screening office. (I do not think any of the principals realized that the screen itself may be the prepotent selection factor.) They are very satisfied with the pool of candidates they get. For the most part, they feel that the ASFP does a remarkable job of providing them with qualified candidates. Those who remember the old system, however, seem a little more satisfied than the newer members of the administrative staffs. The selection process, as noted, though appearing to be part centralized, part decentralized, could be actually considered very centralized. All the real power, it seems, is in the hands of the ASFP. Some of the newer administrators appear to barely recognize this, though it is not of great concern to them. The majority of administrators have other things to worry about than recruitment and selection, since the system is working well for them.

In most schools, the staff as well as the principal is involved in the decisionmaking about whether or not to hire someone. New teachers are seen as team members and thus the school staff feels it must be intimately involved in the decision itself. Some staff members usually participate in the interview at the site. This seems more prevalent at the elementary than the secondary schools where the departmental structure is different. In the elementary schools, it is quite common for teachers of the same grade to work together on common curriculum objectives. Thus, selecting a new teacher can be a very important issue for the personnel at a school. For the most part, the teachers feel they have been part of the selection process. During interviews with teachers who have recently been hired by the school district, they said they felt very good about the teacher input to the selection process. They, also, wanted to feel a welcome member of a team. Again, this was truer at the elementary level than the secondary level.

Apparently, some schools or principals are more successful than others in recruiting and hiring a candidate they prefer. Word gets around. Some schools are considered "better" than other schools. Some principals are considered "better" than others. Although there seems to be a belief that there are no bad schools and no bad principals throughout Mesa, there nevertheless is a clear hierarchy. Sometimes candidates will interview at a particular school and will come back to the Central Office and ask the ASFP whether they will get another opportunity to interview if they turn down the job at a particular school. They clearly know the "folklore" of the district and have definite preferences. They might well take a job if they thought no others would be offered. But if they have the feeling that the ASFP would give them other opportunities to interview, they would rather wait and take their chances elsewhere. The ASFP, therefore, has a good deal of influence in this situation, particularly with the placement of the strongest teachers. After years of experience, the ASFP can estimate accurately a teacher's chances of getting picked at a site. Thus, he might agree to have some teachers wait until they get a chance at the school they want, knowing that the odds are high they will be selected. The risk for a teacher, however, is that the decisions for hiring are made at the site. Turning down an offer at one school has no bearing on the decision to be made at another. More often than not, a new teacher takes what is offered and tries to transfer later on.

Certain principals and schools have gained reputations, whether justified or not. The principals recognized this. They also recognized that some of them were better at recruitment than others. One, in particular, said that every time he got candidates he liked, he could sell them on his school. He never loses the ones he wants. Some principals probably make some deals. That is, if a male candidate appears it is possible that at an elementary school he might be offered special kinds of incentives if he were to choose that school. For example, class size can be manipulated a little bit. This helps "sweeten the pot." Some principals seem better able at manipulating these incentives than others, and it helps them attract candidates to their campuses.

The personnel office seems to do the grade placement of new teachers very well. It is rare that a teacher appears on more than one list when principals are hiring, say, for teachers at the second and fourth grade. So a good deal of the screening has already taken place. Nevertheless, principals have the option and right to reassign. If they really like a person and want him or her on the staff, they might assign the candidate to the third grade class rather than the second grade class that was applied for. For the most part, the preferences of the teachers for particular grade or course placements are honored. Again, this can be done because of the very large pool of applicants that Mesa has, and the large number of job openings each year.

In the interviews, one topic of interest was how school districts deal with external pressures to satisfy competing goals. In particular, there was curiosity about whether these pressures affect the selection process. The principals, however, seemed unanimous in believing that the procedures (which include the application, the interview, the letters of recommendation, etc.) serve as a way of avoiding any undue pressures. A well-running system, administered fairly to all candidates, keeps the principals from becoming the pawns of special interest groups. For example, when a new position is announced, it is uncommon for members of the parent teachers organization, or aides in the district, to come to the principal who has the position and ask to be hired. They may know the principal from previous work in the school. The principal can fully encourage these people to go to the personnel office and complete *all* the forms necessary. In this way, the system keeps the principals from pressure.

The differences in values and goals influencing the selection of teachers shows up when the site interviews take place. Certain candidates are rated by one principal as "unacceptable," "a bore," or "probably remote from kids." Another principal will take the same candidate and comment that the interview was totally successful. Each candidate is rated at the site by the principal. This feedback comes to the Central Office so it can keep track of what is being said about each candidate in the pool. Any consistency in information, such as a candidate who does very poorly in the site interviews, is used as the basis of possible reevaluation of the candidate's file. It is possible to be downgraded from the number one category to the second or third category after this reevaluation by the AFSP. Single bits of information are considered just part of the selection process, with an understanding that each principal is trying to achieve, in reality, some philosophic orientation or is trying to find a particular person for a particular slot in the school.

Occasionally, as noted above, if the ASFP has already made a commitment to hire somebody, there is subtle pressure placed on some of the principals to hire that person. However, this is done infrequently, and even then it would be on a candidate who has passed with flying colors all the formal procedures, including very good responses to the MEPI interview.

The large size of the Mesa applicant pool has spared most of the people in Mesa from a common problem in other districts, namely, inability to find or hire exactly the type of person that is wanted. Occasionally, it does happen, and in that case many of the principals say they would prefer to have a substitute teacher rather than hire someone right away that they do not like.

Selection, of course, involves informal elements whereby some candidates arrange to get a "leg up." For example, it is possible that during the MEPI interview the interviewer will write comments on the form that say the person is outstanding. A candidate could also have unusually outstanding recommendations. These are the "normal" channels and they merely make one candidate look a little better than another. It does not result in much of a "leg up" but does provide a bit of an advantage.

The school principals, however, do have some preferences for people they have personally supervised. A person who has been a substitute teacher in the school and has done very well really does have a "leg up" when interviewing for a position in that school. The candidates still have to meet all of the formal criteria, including taking the MEPI. But they do have an advantage when it comes to interviewing. The ASFP notes that the substitute teacher pool is dependent on economic conditions. At the moment, that pool is small.

The principals encourage substituting in the local area when experienced teachers come to Mesa. Letters of recommendation from fellow principals *in the area* count for more than letters of recommendation from principals in Iowa and Kansas. The principals' network is always at work, and the principals either personally know or know of others within the region. Thus, a local letter of reference seems to provide a little bit of extra support when a candidate is interviewing.

Sometimes just going through the interviews with one principal leads to recommendations to another principal. For example, a teacher may place second out of five or six candidates at the site but may still be considered a very fine candidate. That principal would call a colleague and say: "Why don't you take a look at Mr. X, he really looked terrific here." Those kinds of recommendations give people a "leg up."

The pool of candidates is largest in late spring and early summer. That is when the majority of job offers are made. Most of the positions for the Mesa schools are, therefore, filled before the start of school. Nevertheless, some reshuffling takes place the week before and the first week of the school year. During this time, it is a trifle more difficult for principals to find the teachers they want but still not a major problem. The candidate pool is still quite large. Problems exist in the fall--late September, October, and November--when the pool of acceptable candidates in the area has been exhaused. Virtually all the good teachers in the Phoenix area hold jobs. Teachers wanting to move to Mesa later in the year, or those who will move without a firm job offer, have not yet appeared in the files of the personnel office. New college graduates are not yet available. Thus, the biggest problems are in late fall. The situation eases again in the early spring and by late in the spring and early summer the pool is large once again.

It should be apparent that the major goal of the personnel office is to recruit and screen candidates. It spends most of its resources doing that. Only a very small percentage of the resources available to the personnel office are used for follow-up or any other activities.

From interviews with the ASFP, principals, and newly hired teachers, there seem to be two major problems associated with the Mesa system. The first is that many teachers are put off by the formality of the procedures. Although this does not seem to affect the size and quality of the candidate pool, all of the teachers interviewed said they knew teachers who decided it simply "wasn't worth it." These teachers found it easier to interview in other districts where they were assured higher probabilities of being hired for the jobs they want. Certainly the processes seem to be less formal in surrounding districts. Mesa seems to be the most formalized of all those in this region. This may be viewed positively by some prospective teachers but is clearly seen as a problem by many prospective teachers.

The second problem has to do with speed of hiring. Because of the formalized procedure, and the fact that only the ASFP has the authority to offer jobs, there is sometimes a delay of many days between the principal's selection of a candidate and the issuance of a formal notification of hire. In that time, particularly during the rush season of late spring and early summer, some good candidates get away. That is, Chandler or Tempe might pick them up. The farther from town and the smaller the district, the more likely it is that informal mechanisms exist, including the principal's ability to make offers at the site. Although most members of the administrative staff think the system they have works well, they have all had some experience with the delays between interview, selection, and hiring.

There seems to be very little that can be done about the teachers that are "put off" by the selection procedures of the Mesa schools. It may actually be a form of screening that helps the district. It may lead to a selection bias in favor of those wanting order, formalism, professional appearing treatment, etc. The selection procedures are viewed by the people in the system as working very well for Mesa. With regard to the other problem, the personnel office is working on ways to improve the speed of issuance of a notification to a person that he or she is hired.

One problem that no one mentioned is the built-in bias against out-of-region people. There is a definite reluctance to call up someone in Minnesota and say "fly on down, you're looking good." Mesa cannot reimburse an out-of-state candidate's travel expense during the recruitment process. This must limit, in some ways, the real size and diversity of the candidate pools. An additional problem, pointed out by a veteran teacher, is that the maximum credit you can get for your experience is five years. These limitations are placed upon Mesa by state legislative mandate. This district, which pursues excellence in its pool of candidates, has a salary structure that would militate against recruiting a brilliant mathematics teacher with 12 years service. It is as if there is a conspiracy by all districts to prevent the development of "free agents" in teaching. One cannot help feeling there is some kind of restraint of trade, anticompetitive collusion, price fixing, etc. Teachers may need a kind of free agent status, like baseball and football players, so that after so many years with a district they could be bid for by other districts. I think that teachers' salaries may always be kept low if districts refuse to pay for experience and excellence when recruiting. This is a point worthy of further consideration.

Effectiveness of Selection

There was a general feeling that the selection procedure operates quite well in recruiting the kinds of teachers desired by the district. Clearly, the principals recognize that the screening is in the hands of the ASFP. In that sense, it is centralized. But generally, the principals who do the actual hiring are very pleased with the pool of candidates they have been getting over the last number of years. The changing nature of recruitment in the next few years could strain the Mesa system. It is possible that this system works well only in times of high supply and low demand for teachers. Predictions about the next decade point out that supply will not meet the demand for new teachers. Mesa may have to do some things differently in that case.

In general, people are pleased with the selection procedure and they believe it to be a fair one. There are rules to be followed and that helps make the system fair. The quality of the pool has remained high.

It was surprising and nice to hear that almost all the principals and Central Office administrators believe that the teachers coming in today are as good as or better than the teachers who came in previous years. The one exception, mentioned above, is that the male elementary teachers seem poorer in quality in the view of one particular principal who is searching for male elementary school candidates.

One of the constraining features of the selection process seems to be costs. To go out and recruit in Massachusetts and Northern California is expensive. College recruiting trips have to be planned well, to visit as many places as possible. Nevertheless, the outreach of the district provides the large pool that is needed because of the rigorous screening procedures that are used. Reliance on the MEPI as a screening instrument, with a high failure rate, means that a very large pool of candidates must be examined. The money and time that go into administering the MEPI instrument is considered by virtually all parties to be worth the added costs of increasing the size of the pool of candidates to interview.

Some ideas about how to improve the way the selection process currently operates were offered. The ASFP would like to give more training to the people who do the interviewing. He believes the procedures could be even more standardized, and that the reliability and validity of the instrument could therefore be improved. Classroom visits to prospective teachers were cited by the principals as something worthwhile, but not very feasible. It is an odd field that relies on so much self-report about performance, but never spends much time watching performance, either before or after employment is offered.

Exit interviews do take place when a teacher leaves the district. But because turnover rates are low, and the most common exit statements have to do with pregnancy and changes in a spouse's job, there is very little useful feedback about the conditions of employment. Even the high rate of attrition among probationary teachers reveals little. They often leave not to go elsewhere but to change careers. Thus, there is not much feedback that can be used to improve the system.

The Mesa school system does not systematically assess how its selection practices or other personnel policies affect the composition of the teaching force. In general, once a hiring decision is made, the school system does very little to assess the impact of the selection process. Follow-up is all in the hands of the principal and the staff development group, those charged with fostering the growth of the individual teachers once they are hired.

From an analysis of the selection practices, it appears that the composition of the teaching force is constrained somewhat by the selection procedures. Out-of-state and highly experienced teachers are systematically discriminated against. No evil intentions exist, but with the salary schedule being what it is and the cost of travel for teachers being rather exorbitant, excellent out-of-region teachers are not found in the pool as often as might be desired. Since Mesa is predominantly a white area, this also means that the district is missing its chance to recruit Puerto Ricans from New York, blacks throughout the East and Midwest, Native Americans from the Midwest and South, and so forth. Those teachers with the strongest sense of professionalism, however, are most likely to be in the pool of teachers for Mesa. That is because the interview procedure appears to be so rigorous in comparison to many other districts. There are those who like informality, but Mesa is formal. There are those who distrust tests, but Mesa uses the MEPI as a testing instrument. In some districts references are read; in Mesa, some are actually called to verify and illuminate what is said. What is presented to a prospective candidate is a formalized, professional-appearing system. Recruitment and retention do *not* seem hampered by the rigor of the procedures. The reputation of the district aids enormously in recruitment and retention.

It is not likely that the selection processes result in any great improvement in teacher effectiveness. The new version of the screening instrument includes a section on knowledge of and attitude toward certain teaching skills; it is doubtful that the new instrument will do much to improve teacher effectiveness. It might also be argued that because of the very strong affective orientation to the scoring of the

MEPI, there exists a systematic bias against teachers who are the most cognitive in orientation. Yet it seems evident that some part of teacher effectiveness is certainly related to issues of knowledge of the curriculum and the subject matter. Nonetheless, it is quite possible that there is a systematic bias in the MEPI *against* people who hold these concerns very strongly. When this is coupled with the rather pervasive disdain for seriously considering a candidate's course work and grades, it appears likely that the district could exclude, say, an excellent social studies teacher who is devoted to conveying the essence of the content to students. Having made this comment, however, it should be pointed out that the Mesa schools feel quite satisfied with the quality of their teachers just the way the system is right now. In summary, although there may be some systematic biases operating in the Mesa selection system, these must be weighed against the expressed satisfaction by the users of the system. The administrative team in Mesa is unusually consistent in their admiration for the way the system operates.

The respondents were asked what they thought was the most important thing the district could do to improve the overall quality of teachers and teaching in this district. It was interesting that the respondents to this question had to pause for lengthy periods of time to come up with an answer. A number of the answers revolved around improved staff development and the involvement of the principals in helping to determine the staff development enterprise. Several other comments were related to the lack of money for teachers to attend conferences. Currently, the district provides a fund of only about $30,000 a year for attending conferences. A teacher's request would go to a committee of administrators and teachers which would then decide whether or not to honor the request. In a district this size, the money available hardly allows anyone to go anywhere for self-improvement. It certainly prevents teachers from going any great distance. Principals pointed out that industry spends much more on its staff development than does the teaching profession, and more could be done that way. One principal remarked that the research on teaching is filtering down very slowly. As extensive as the staff development program is in Mesa, it handles only a small percentage of the teachers each year. The research, he believes, is coming out faster than that.

One principal noted another way that the teaching effectiveness of the district could be improved. That was through improvement of the inservice education of the principals. Currently, the principals take an instructional effectiveness inservice course. It is designed to provide them with clinical supervision skills similar to the model being promulgated by Madeline Hunter. Unfortunately, this activity receives rather low priority on the principals' list of things to do. The sessions are also too far apart and it is difficult to keep the continuity of the training in mind. On the surface, the school district is responding to the concerns that principals become instructional leaders. But the fact of the matter is that the principals themselves appear to be too busy with other commitments to take on that role to any greater degree than they already do.

SUPPLY, DEMAND, AND RECRUITMENT

The mean age of the Mesa teaching force is in the early thirties, as might be expected with a growing district. The national trend toward a "graying" of the work force is not characteristic of Mesa. The mean experience of the work force is seven to eight years. About half the teachers in the district have masters' degrees. About 7 percent of the teaching force is Hispanic, spread relatively evenly across schools. One and one-half percent of the teaching force is black, and one-half percent is Native American. Females predominate in the elementary schools. About two-thirds of the teachers in high schools are male.

Mesa has a turnover rate of about 8-9 percent, a rate that has been constant for around a decade. The chief reason for leaving the district has been relocation of a spouse. A typical pattern is a job change by a husband (perhaps an electrical engineer at Motorola (which has 5,000 employees in Mesa), or a white collar worker) that also requires a move by the wife. The second most common reason for turnover is pregnancy. A predominantly female work force in their early thirties, with large numbers also in their late twenties, means a staff with a high fertility rate. This shows up particularly in the newest schools, in the outlying areas, with the youngest teaching force. One high school, the oldest in the city, has a work force predominantly in their fifties and has not had any turnover in years. District turnover rates have been steady and low for a number of years. Very few people who want to remain in teaching choose to work in another district. It is rare for a teacher to leave Mesa, say, to teach in Chandler or Phoenix. Some teachers, however, are lost to industry (book publishers, computer firms) and some to administration. Their numbers are small.

There is some evidence that the composition of the teaching force is changing. There are now fewer male applicants for elementary school teaching positions than there were a decade ago. There are also fewer minorities applying to the district. This is producing a growing problem in Mesa and, probably, is a nationwide problem as well. In general, the applicant pool for elementary school teachers is large, but there is a shrinking of the applicant pool for secondary school positions, particularly in certain subjects, such as mathematics or science.

Most administrators felt that current teachers in the pool are as bright or brighter and as well-trained or better-trained than those of a decade ago. The one clear exception to this general belief was expressed as disappointment with the male applicants for elementary teaching positions. In the opinion of one administrator, there has not been a red-hot male applicant for an elementary teaching position in a decade.

All are convinced that the opening of new careers combined with low educational salaries and low prestige for the profession have had effects. Nevertheless, they believe they are still getting many talented females to enter the profession, and they are keeping them in the profession.

As discussed above, Mesa is a very desirable place to live. Moreover, the school district in most comparisons with other districts appears to be a more desirable place to work. Thus, in the past, Mesa has had no trouble recruiting the kind of teachers it wants. Furthermore, it expect no difficulty in the future, but have not had to face a national teacher shortage before. Mesa is aware that in some secondary subject matter areas the pool of applicants is shrinking, a new phenomenon for this school district. It expects to hire 250-300 teachers a year for the next decade, just as it did for the last decade.

About 40 special education or special certificates are needed each year (e.g., speech therapists and physical therapists).

In this competition for new teachers, Mesa competes with Chandler, Tempe, and now even Apache Junction and Gilbert, all growing eastern suburbs of the Phoenix metropolitan area. To a lesser extent, Peoria and Glendale (western suburbs) are also competitors. But Mesa usually wins, if it is fast enough to act (a problem to be discussed below) when it finds a teacher it wants to hire. One principal, also an MEPI interviewer, expressed the reasons for this kind of success in recruiting:

> I think teachers are looking at the number of resources a district has and I think Mesa has very good resources. . . . I think because Mesa is so large, Mesa tends to have a lot of teachers taking classes. . . . So other teachers come in contact with a lot of Mesa teachers through ASU and they hear the things that are going on in Mesa and they think they would like to be a part of that. . . . Mesa has also done really well in different competitions at the secondary and junior high levels as far as band and in other competitions. . . . I think especially in the area of drama, music, sports, and things like that, a teacher might figure if they're winning this many or they're having this many children make it into the finals, or if they win the competitions, then that district must have a lot to offer me as a teacher.

These kind of statements were consistent throughout the interviews, reflecting genuine pride in their district. Another administrator expressed it as: "reputation is more important in recruitment than starting salaries." Another administrator said "I really think that if we've got first shot at the person and we like them and we can get our paperwork process done, we'll get the person. I don't think I've ever lost a person that I've wanted if I had first crack."

In 1983-84, 42 percent of those recruited were new teachers, 58 percent had experience. In 1984-85, 48 percent of the teachers hired were new, 52 percent experienced. The trend for higher percentages of new teachers is expected to continue a little longer. Since Mesa continues to attract experienced teachers from the area, that rise will probably not go so high as it might in some high growth, less desirable areas of the state.

Formal visits to recruit are made to California (University of Southern California, University of California at Los Angeles, and California State University at Humbolt). Brigham Young University and the University of Utah are also regularly visited for candidates. The year 1984-85 saw visits beyond the neighboring states of California, Utah, and New Mexico. Mesa recruiters also went to Massachusetts, where they have been very successful in recruiting in past years. Massachusetts has an educational recruiting consortium of 39 colleges and universities that meet over a three-day period and bring in several hundred students. The quality of novice teachers (and experienced teachers wanting to move) was judged to be very high during those recruitment trips. Mesa has been a part of that recruitment "fair" the past two years. They also recruited at Lesly College in Boston, and regularly work on recruitment in Iowa and Kansas.

The district has a notebook, updated annually, that is sent to over 100 college and university placement offices; it describes the Mesa schools and solicits applicants. The notebook has been commended by placement office directors as "exceptional--the only district in the USA to have such an excellent system."

The experienced teachers--roughly 50 percent of the new teachers--are not usually actively recruited. They make application themselves, by letter or by dropping into the personnel office. They may be more actively sought after their application is complete. The applicant pool runs up to 3,000. About 1,500 of these will be interviewed. Approximately 300 will be hired from those with completed files (those that include the MEPI interview).

As noted, the district travels the length of the United States to try to increase the pool of acceptable candidates for hiring. The effort has been to find good candidates and has not concentrated on a particular subject area. Nevertheless, there is a recognition that the pool of candidates in science and mathematics is shrinking, although no grade level shortages have yet occurred. The personnel office is beginning to call universities early in the year to make contact with candidates in mathematics and science. They have not had difficulty hiring in mathematics and science as long as they are able to offer employment to the individual in the spring and early summer. If they lose somebody, and have to hire in the late summer or early fall, then they have to put a special effort into recruitment for those positions. There simply are not enough candidates in the pool to find the applicants they want.

There is concern about getting enough special education and special certificated people. Teachers of the emotionally handicapped, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists are very difficult to find. Universities are often called to inquire if such people exist. Professional associations are solicited. The physical therapist position is a non-teaching position but the therapists work with students and it is very closely related to the teaching profession. After the district contacts colleges and universities to find candidates, they run ads in the national publications for physical therapists and also in the state publications and newspapers.

When they have certain kinds of vacancies, such as in physical therapy, and the position remains vacant, the district hires consultant services. That is, they contract with individuals in the community who are not part of the school system and who are non-certificated. Some coaches also work on contract in this way. In other areas, such as vocational education, the district may bring someone in with an emergency certificate. To cover some kinds of shortages, the district may have to reassign teachers. Recently, they had to find someone for the visually handicapped students. A teacher from another area of special education was reassigned. The district works hard trying to avoid hiring people who are not qualified. They try not to go too far down in the MEPI rating categories simply to fill classrooms. Thus far, they have not had the problem of shortages in any particular areas that could have required them to fill classrooms with teachers in whom they had no faith. Nevertheless, they do *some* reassignment, they do get *some* emergency certificates for one year, and they do assign *some* marginally rated people whenever classrooms need to be filled. Their major problems arise when they try to fill a position that has a small applicant pool in the late fall. For example, if a teacher leaves in September, October, or November in an area like speech therapy, they have a very hard time filling the position. If they are required to fill the position in late spring and early summer, when the greatest number of teachers with talent are available, Mesa does not have serious problems.

Generally, Mesa has been in the advantageous position of having to do very little to "sweeten the pot." Special salary arrangements are not part of the bargaining process. The benefits of working in the district are explained and most of the time that sells the district. Sometimes, however, special inducements are offered. A recent case concerned a University of Arizona top mathematics student. She was offered her choice of school. That is probably about as far as the school district would go to induce the candidates they want to sign a contract. The district relies on its reputation.

Mesa administrators believe they have been attracting the same kinds of candidates into their pool over the last decade. Educational experience, number of degrees, race, and sex all seem relatively stable from year to year. Exceptions already noted are the slight increase in new teachers compared to experienced teachers, and the reduction in the number of men going into elementary education.

POSTHIRING PRACTICES

The Mesa Public School system has an orientation program for new teachers. At the start of the year, they are introduced to the way the district operates. In addition, the unit administrator has an orientation for the teacher at the building level.

But the real program for new teachers, experienced or not, is administered by the Director of Planning, Staff Development, and Special Projects. This includes, first, the *Educators Skills Program* (ESP). This program starts immediately upon hire (and, indirectly, it is a comment on the perceived quality of teacher training institutes).

The other major program administered by the staff development office is the *Teachers Inservice Program Sessions* (TIPS).

The ESP and TIPS programs are extensive and well-attended. New teachers perceived the ESP program as useful, though some experienced teachers complained that they "knew all that stuff." Other experienced teachers, however, saw the ESP program as a chance to ensure they did well in Mesa, a chance to meet other new teachers in the district, and as a brush-up of things they knew. Thus, the experienced teachers were not all negative about being forced to take the ESP program. The ESP program requires classroom observations and consultations. Each site differs in how it approaches that task. At the high school level, it is more likely to be the assistant principals and department heads who visit each teacher. At the elementary level, it is usually the principal who does the visitations. The visitations are to help check on discipline, to see that the person is well-integrated into the team, and to observe and confer regularly. Many of the elementary schools have a half-time basic skill/resource teacher who spends a good deal of time with the new teachers in the district. This helps get the new teachers into the reading programs, or the science programs, or the math programs of the district. A particular responsibility of the basic skill/resource teachers is to integrate the new members into the district's system. Some of the elementary schools also have "buddy" systems, whereby an older master teacher type takes the new teacher under his or her wing. Some of the principals spend a good deal of their time trying to get across the philosophy of the school to the new teacher. There is a lot of "this is the way we do it around here." A number of the principals are trying for a consistent ethos in their schools with regard to discipline, dealing with parents, academic focus of the school, etc.

In the Mesa public schools, the probationary teachers are evaluated twice a year. Continuing (tenured) teachers are evaluated once a year in accordance with a new Arizona law. The district goes through a "short form" year and a "long form" year. In the short form year, they simply sit down and go over the evaluation and talk about the teacher's plans for growth. In the long form year, the procedures are much more formalized. The difference between the two forms of evaluation is simply a matter of economy. It is impossible to do the job right with so many teachers and so little administrative time available. The form requires a statement of purpose, goals, and growth for the year. The principal and the teacher agree upon these goals.

The assistant principals generally do the evaluations at the high school level. At the elementary level, the principal usually does the evaluations. It is the principal's decision to grant tenure. It is the principal and the resource teacher who have most direct knowledge of a probationary teacher's ability. The resource teacher advises the principal and the probationary teacher but has no direct decisionmaking authority. Some of the deficiencies found in a probationary teacher can be made up by taking course work. Classroom demonstration of skills is encouraged. A teacher found deficient in some area is asked to pick a day when they can show they have learned those skills.

It is interesting to look at the difference between public perception and the perception of the people who hire and train the probationary teachers. The public seems to be angry when the rate of dismissal for probationary teachers is very low. The other side of that coin, however, is that with very fine screening procedures, tough interviews, and a large pool, coupled with support systems in the initial years, the dismissal rate is unlikely to be high.

A number of the principals pointed out that they were able to get some teachers to resign before they had to fight any battles at the time tenure was to be granted. The evaluation procedures for new teachers, described above, prove invaluable when entering those kinds of "did-you-ever-think-about-another-career" conversations.

The attrition rate in the first five years is higher than in the next 10 or more years of service. New people are most likely to leave. The attrition rate for the newly hired teachers, before the granting of tenure by the district, is estimated to be as high as 15 percent. The overall district rate, for all teachers, is 7-9 percent annually.

Mesa does not appear to have any unique policies or programs designed to provide incentives for the retention of high quality teachers. There are some of the more usual programs for rewarding people. There is a teacher of the month program in which a person is recognized at the board meeting and is presented with a $300 gift to spend toward improving teaching or for buying teacher materials. Different schools give recognition to good employees in different ways. Sometimes the teachers who are quite good get a chance to become the basic skills/resource teachers. It gets them out of the classroom teaching role, which some desire. Some, of course, prefer to stay in their classrooms and do not choose to become resource teachers. But it does not really give them any greater salary.

The salary schedule recognized longevity. After someone has been with the district so many years, they get an additional 2 percent even when they reach the top of the salary scale. With longevity, early retirement becomes a possibility. The district substitutes cash payments or sabbaticals for a teacher's unused sick leave. One gets the impression from asking this question that people have not thought very hard about the issue of retention in the Mesa public schools. Once again, the reputation of the Mesa schools is seen as the reward itself. There is a good deal of pride in the district. Because other school districts do not seek experienced people as if they were "free agents," as in baseball or football, it is not easy to get special recognition as an excellent teacher when you have been on the staff for 10 or more years. Imagine what education would be like if the "best" teachers with 10 years experience were bid for by districts with a need for their services. A "free market" would, no doubt, leave some districts with only ordinary teachers. But it would really boost salaries and the prestige of the teachers judged to be excellent.

The district's commitment to professional development is seen in its support of inservice training and in the TIPS program. The district considers its inservice training program to be among the best in the nation. It certainly is an active one. Courses are constantly offered. The Mesa teachers come to believe that this is an appropriate part of their professional life. More than most districts, Mesa has established norms for promoting professional growth. Some of the teachers, of course, consider the whole process to be an imposition.

Either the district or the ASU campus provides the courses for advancement. As noted above, the customary degree in the Mesa schools is a master's degree. Because the norms are in place for extensive staff development, the program is perceived to be a success. That is, large numbers of teachers attend. Very little in the way of formal evaluation of the program seems to occur. The programs are not seen by teachers as "Mickey Mouse." However, they do not appear to be of a very high intellectual level, either. Perhaps a social/professional function is served by these courses. They may break the pattern of isolation so common among educators.

The district programs are generally taught by basic skill/resource teachers. These are the people who have the responsibility for the curriculum in reading, math, or science. These are generally fine curriculum specialists who get a chance to develop a comprehensive and a standardized curriculum from school to school throughout the district.

Overall, the district does not have big problems with respect to teacher retention and improvement. As noted above, the district does not have a high rate of turnover. Because of its salary structure, local school support, and perceived excellence, this district retains its faculty. Although there is much room for improvement in the district's handling of senior faculty, compared to other districts in the state and the nation, the Mesa public schools seem to be one of the most desirable school systems in which to work.

TEACHER COMMENTS

Among the remarkable things learned during these interviews was that both teachers and administrators perceived the system to operate in a very similar way. Teachers were, however, a bit put off by the formal procedures of Mesa. Nevertheless, they recognized that it was a quality district and they accepted that it takes a special effort to get into a quality district. Their views were like those of the people who go through an initiation ceremony at a fraternity. The harder the initiation is, the more likely a member will come to value the fraternity.

Mesa seems to be getting teachers who like the kind of structure that Mesa provides. There is a districtwide curriculum, a cope and sequence chart, and a monitoring system to see that teachers teach what they are supposed to. There is a lot of emphasis on drill and practice. The only negative comments that were offered when interviewing the teachers had to do student testing. Some teachers felt that Mesa schools expect too much student testing, and many of them were not used to that in their former districts. The Mesa curriculum is partly well-structured, children do a lot of workbook pages, tests, and the other kinds of things you expect to see in a school district with high achievement and a strong commitment to basic education.

One of the first-year teachers described how she got her job in the Mesa schools. It began with an interview in February, when she was visiting Mesa. She took the Teacher Perceiver Interview at that time. The district said it would be in touch. When the teacher moved out to the area, later in the spring, she checked that all her certification was in place and that her file was complete. She was then advised to seek employment in the schools and chose to work as a playground aide. She went on one school interview, and did not like the experience very much. It was a very difficult interview and in some ways a bit demeaning. (This is a teacher with extensive experience.) The teacher then went on a second interview and was one of four candidates. There was no callback at that time. The waiting was very hard. The principals say that the Central Office will be in touch and leave it at that. There was still no callback or letter. In August, the principal called and asked if she was still interested. A few days later, a formal letter of intention to hire arrived at her house. The message from this teacher seems to be that there should be more feedback along the way, because the waiting is very difficult. This teacher almost gave up a number of times and applied to the Chandler district. She was, however, living in the Mesa district and wanted to work in the schools that her children attend.

The teachers had praise for the MEPI. They all recognized that its purpose was to eliminate the personal issues and try to come up with a standard interview procedure. They were appreciative of it, even when they felt it was a bit difficult to go through.

A number of the teachers reported that there was no personal attention during the selection process. Some of them had come from very small districts in Arizona or in the Midwest. In such districts, the principals sometimes give you advice on how to interview. The teachers say the site interviews in Mesa are very idiosyncratic. Sometimes they went well, sometimes they did not, and they felt it had more to do with who was interviewing them than their own general ability. The teachers generally felt that they were expected to teach more in Mesa than in districts where they had worked previously, or when they were student teachers. To teach more means to keep the pace high and to spend more time on the three Rs and less time on instruction in the arts. Some of the elementary school teachers felt that they wanted to teach art and music a little more, but were prevented from doing so by the strong basics orientation in Mesa. A number of them remarked that they had more aides in other districts. All commented that the performance expectations for children was higher in Mesa. Therefore, it was harder, *physically*, to teach in Mesa. They had to use more drill and there was more pressure on them to produce. Some of the teachers noted that there is a side effect to this. Some of the children feel the pressure and "act out." Self-esteem is hard to build for low ability children in a high pressure academic environment.

The teachers were very pleased with the resource teachers that helped them when they started in the district. The team approach in many schools seemed to pay off. They felt that they were taken under the wing of a few teachers when they first started.

The recordkeeping system in Mesa appears to be unusually formal. New teachers seem to need extra help in learning how to do that. There is a feeling held by the most experienced teachers that the district really did not know how to treat them when they were new in the Mesa schools. They were really not treated as if they were exceptional top-of-the-line professionals. They were, instead, treated as if all their past experience did not count for much.

The evaluations of the new teachers ranged from very informal to formal and as a separate issue, from noninformative to informative. It seems as if each school has its own particular system of evaluating. That is in line with what the ASFP holds as philosophy. Evaluation is a school site responsibility.

In this district, when teachers need help, they generally turn to other teachers. When the support is needed to deal with parents, they try to bring in the principal.

Although it was easy to get the special Arizona requirements out of the way during the first year or two, the new teachers felt that it was an inordinate burden, particularly when they had to take the reading practicum, the reading decoding courses, Arizona Constitution, as well as TIPS and ESP courses. The first few years seem to require the most effort.

In response to the question about whether they would become teachers again, most of the teachers were not sure they would. They all recognized that it is a very demanding profession. Nevertheless, they all admitted they like it. All commented that they love their jobs and that money is not paramount, but that they sure could use more of it!

Case Study 2

TEACHER SELECTION IN THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) pay a great deal of attention to the teacher selection process, which includes centralized screening mechanisms and decentralized hiring practices. The centralized screening mechanisms--primarily a structured interview, a locally developed and validated testing program, and a weighting formula to rank order applicants--assess the quality of the district's applicants. The decentralized hiring practices--primarily a principal's "informal recruiting" and selection of centrally referred applicants--enable a local school to hire the candidate who best "fits" its needs. Thus, district teacher selection practices constitute a division of labor whereby both Central Office personnel and principals expend considerable energy and resources ensuring successful teacher selection outcomes.

Montgomery County, then, is a district that takes seriously the task of selecting qualified personnel for its schools. It has also tried to balance the needs of a large school system for centralized management and support with the needs of local principals for significant input and decisionmaking authority in the hiring process. Despite, and in part because of, these efforts, teacher selection in Montgomery County is not unproblematic. The logistical demands of the system are enormous, and current procedures for handling information about candidates have not been entirely equal to the task. In addition, the system is designed to screen candidates from a large applicant pool. With growing shortages of applicants, the selection process results in some suboptimal teacher assignments. These problems threaten to grow more prominent in the years to come.

Our case study reveals that because of these demands, several complex variables are shaping the district's teacher selection process. These variables include:

- *Recruiting strategies* that have been "out of synch" with the demands of the labor market.
- *Screening requirements* that "test" for academic standards but may limit access to a diminishing pool of applicants.
- *Placement policies* that treats applicants evenhandedly but slow down the hiring process and result in the inequitable distribution of teaching talent across the district.
- *A new personnel management information system* that may begin to be able to meet the logistical demands of the system.
- *The induction of new teachers* that provides formal support for some novices may not be adequate because of the distribution of support and evaluation resources across the district's schools.

MCPS is a self-evaluative and data-conscious district that strives to correct its problems. Thus, the case study of teacher selection in Montgomery County describes the district's response to past and emerging problems. More important, the case study raises many issues of particular importance to large school districts as well as to all districts facing growing shortages of teachers in a political climate that demands explicit measures to ensure the hiring of qualified teachers. This case study examines Montgomery County's highly developed teacher selection process in terms of its organizational context, historical context, and current selection practices as well as the effects of the process itself.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

The Community

Montgomery County is an affluent community adjacent to the nation's capital of Washington, D.C. Although the county's 500 square miles encompass urban, suburban, and rural areas, it is generally viewed as a suburban community.

The county population (579,000 in 1980) has grown over the last decade (registering a 10.8 percent increase between 1970 and 1980)--making it the sixty-fourth largest county in the nation. In 1980, 86 percent of the county's residents were white; 9 percent were black; 4 percent were Asian; 4 percent were Hispanic;[1] and 0.2 percent were Native American. The proportion of minority residents has grown steadily over the last 15 years (from about 4 percent in 1970 to about 14 percent in 1980). Minority group students have been concentrated at the lower end of the county near the District of Columbia, thus posing challenges to the district in maintaining racial balance in the schools.

Despite growth in the county population over the last decade, the school system has experienced declining student enrollments. Two factors may account for this trend. First, the county's population has aged. The county's residents are somewhat older than those of other Maryland counties (about 21 percent of the total population was of school age in 1980, a proportion below the state average). The county has experienced declining birth rates for some time. Second, a significant percentage of the county's school age children attend private schools (more than 16 percent in 1980). The proportion of the county's children attending private schools is by far the highest in the state and represents a slight increase from the previous decade. (In 1970, 14 percent attended private schools.)

Some parents may choose to send their children to private schools because of their dissatisfaction with the public schools. However, in Montgomery County, many parents may choose to send their children to private schools for other reasons as well. County parents are highly educated and affluent. Thus, they are likely to care a great deal about their children's education and are able to pay for private education. This explanation seems reasonable, given that citizens and parents in Montgomery County seem more satisfied with the public schools overall than does the general population. A countywide telephone survey in 1983 revealed that 61 percent of the county's citizens and 78 percent of MCPS parents gave the district schools grades of "A" or "B." By comparison, a 1983 Gallup poll revealed that only 31 percent of all respondents gave the nation's schools grades of "A" or "B."[2]

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[1] Counts of Hispanic citizens overlap with both white and black counts; thus, the percentage totals exceed 100 percent.

Montgomery County residents are by far the most highly educated and most affluent group in the State of Maryland. The proportion of college-educated citizens is more than double the state average. By and large, Montgomery County is a professional, white-collar community. About 30 percent of the labor force is employed in governmental positions and an additional 27 percent work in other professional occupations. In 1982, during the height of the national recession, Montgomery County's unemployment rate was only 3.9 percent, less than half the state average, and well below the national average as well. Personal per capita income is also the highest in the state, and median household income in Montgomery County ranked it sixth among all U.S. counties in 1979. There is increasing diversity among county residents, though. Although nearly 20 percent of households had incomes of $50,000 or more in 1979, over 10 percent had incomes of less than $10,000.

Because of its proximity to the District of Columbia, and the relation of its work force to governmental functions, Montgomery County has a fairly transient population and has attracted many residents from other states. In 1980, for example, only 24 percent of the county's residents were born in Maryland, as compared to over 50 percent for most other counties.

This transiency--and the county's drawing power--affect teacher supply in Montgomery County. Spouses--usually wives--of government officials, diplomats, and other professionals who have recently moved to the county constitute a large proportion of those annually entering the teaching force (estimated as high as 50 percent by district officials). For this reason, the school system has tended to hire a fair number of teachers with previous teaching experience and has tended to worry less about teacher recruitment and supply in recent years than perhaps it would have otherwise.

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[2] "About the Schools in Montgomery County, Maryland," Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD, 1984.

However, another environmental factor may have an opposite effect on teacher supply. The county's high cost of living may inhibit prospective teachers who are single or the sole source of household support from living in Montgomery County and teaching in the district's schools. Housing costs for both owners and renters are the highest in the state and outweigh the district's modest salaries. In 1985-86, MCPS beginning teachers' salaries ranked eighth out of eight area school districts.

The School System

The Montgomery County Public Schools serve over 90,000 students in 152 schools across the county. The system employs slightly more than 6,100 teachers (with about 6,500 support staff personnel) and 520 administrative and supervisory personnel. These figures represent a substantial decline from the mid-1970s, when the system served about 130,000 students and employed more than 6,800 teachers. After many years of phenomenal growth, student enrollments peaked in 1973 and then began declining. The size of the teaching staff began to drop several years later. These changes have greatly influenced the teacher selection process in the county in terms of the intensity of recruitment strategies, the screening requirements, and the hiring and placement policies. Because enrollments grew in one part of the county while declining in other areas, school closings and intradistrict transfers of teachers have affected the selection process.

Montgomery County is a high expenditure school district, with total average per pupil expenditures of $4,100 in 1984. However, teachers' salaries are not particularly high--especially in comparison with other area school districts. In 1984, a beginning teacher with a bachelor's degree would earn $15,561; a teacher at the top of the salary scale, with a master's degree plus 30 credits and 20 years of experience, would earn $35,824. This beginning salary ranked the district fourth of eight districts in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. As previously noted, MCPS salaries have not kept pace with those of its nearby competitors, and in 1986, the county registered the lowest beginning teachers' salary in the area.

Over the past decade, teachers' salaries in Montgomery County, as elsewhere, declined more than 15 percent in real dollar terms. Although teacher recruitment had not been a major source of concern in recent years, increasing shortages in some areas are now forcing attention to the need for competitiveness in the district's salary scale.

Over the past decade, the district's teacher work force has become increasingly experienced. In 1976, approximately 46 percent of all teachers had more than 10 years experience. Presently, nearly 75 percent of Montgomery County teachers have more than 10 years experience. In part, this trend has resulted from increasing stability among the district's teachers--attrition has dropped steadily since the late 1960s. In 1969, the district's attrition rate was 20.5 percent of all teachers. By 1984, teacher attrition had decreased to 7.0 percent (see Fig. 1). An important, point is that those who do leave tend to be among the less experienced staff. Between 1982-85, approximately 28 percent of the district's new teachers left by the end of their second year. This trend has remained constant over the last two decades.

School programs in the county are decidedly academic in orientation. A large proportion of students are enrolled in college preparatory courses, and about 75 percent go on to higher education after graduation. All of the county's 22 high schools are comprehensive, offering a full range of courses in the academic subjects (including advanced placement courses) plus several foreign languages. All middle, intermediate, and junior high schools also offer foreign language instruction beginning in the seventh grade. The district also offers a number of career and vocational education programs, ranging from carpentry and bricklaying to computer programming, which are available to academic as well as vocationally oriented students.

Students in the MCPS have become increasingly diverse. In 1968-69, minority enrollment was about 6 percent of the total. In 1983, minority students made up 26.6 percent of the total student population. Black students were 13.7 percent of the total; Asians were 8.0 percent;

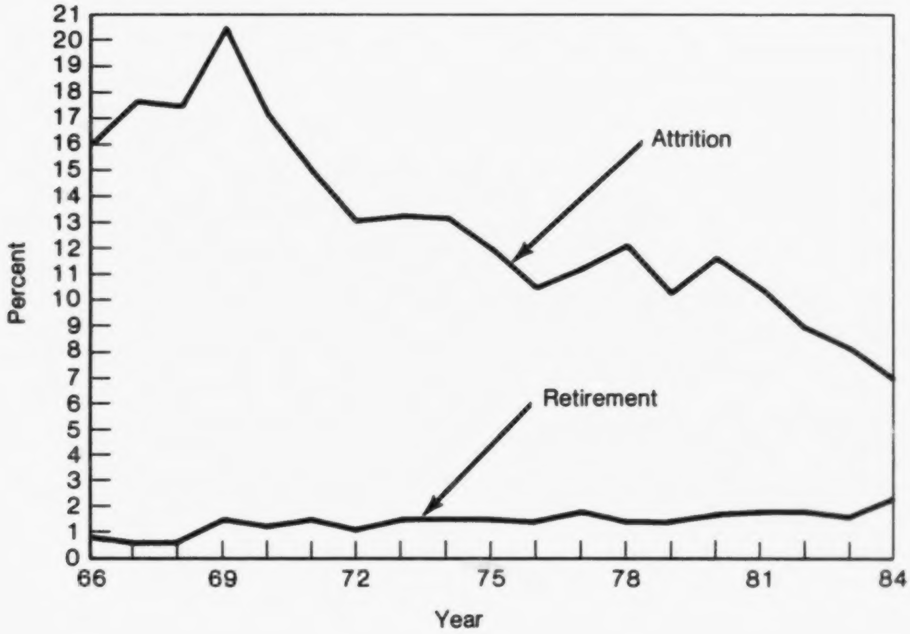

Fig. 1—Attrition and retirement rates, by year

Hispanics were 4.8 percent; and Native Americans 0.2 percent. Improving educational opportunities for these minority students has been an important concern in recent years. The district has encountered difficulty in desegregating its schools and has created voluntary magnet schools in the most heavily minority area of the county in an attempt to promote racial balance and high quality educational programs. The district has also expended considerable effort to hire minority faculty and has increased its proportion of minority teachers from 4.9 percent in 1971 to 11.9 percent in 1984. However, minority teachers are still underrepresented (or in some cases, overrepresented) on many schools' faculties.

Amidst these demographic changes, Montgomery County students have remained high achievers. Approximately 75 percent of the student population attends higher education upon graduation. In 1983, 1.5 percent of the graduating class was named National Merit Scholarship semifinalists and mean scores on the California Achievement Tests ranged from the 74th to 82nd percentile, well above the national average. Yet, there are significant academic achievement differences between majority and minority students. Black and Hispanic students do not score as well on standardized measures of achievement and are generally underrepresented in "gifted and talented" classes. Nonetheless, minority students score above the national norms for both white and minority students and are proportionately represented in academic courses as well as among graduates who pursue higher education.

In sum, the Montgomery County Public Schools' highly developed teacher selection processes have evolved within a favorable, yet complex, organizational context. A favorable organizational context has enabled the district's internal policies to be the most influential force in shaping teacher recruitment and selection. However, with a growing shortage of teachers, the present system, designed to screen candidates from a large applicant pool, may result in suboptimal teacher selection and assignment.

HISTORY OF SELECTION PRACTICES

Over the past 25 years, Montgomery County's teacher selection practices have emphasized recruitment and screening alternately. In the late 1960s to the mid-1970s when the county was growing and the demand for teachers was high, recruitment received primary attention by the personnel office. However, in the mid-1970s, when student enrollments declined and there were large numbers of applicants for smaller numbers of vacancies, the emphasis shifted from recruitment to selection. Elaborate screening devices--structured interviews and proficiency tests--were developed to assess a large applicant pool and recruitment efforts decreased. At the time of this study, demand for teachers was again beginning to grow while supply shrank, and the usefulness of rigorous screening mechanisms was being questioned in the face of emerging shortages. The changes in emphasis of the district's teacher selection procedures have somewhat lagged behind changes in the teacher labor market, creating a situation that one Central Office staff member called "a pendulum that is always out of synch."

Montgomery County's recruitment and selection processes have tended to be reactive rather than anticipatory. By responding to the past rather than anticipating the future, present recruitment and selection practices in Montgomery County may place the district at a competitive disadvantage. Although the district has committed itself over the past two decades to the recruitment and selection of well-qualified teachers, this commitment has not been necessarily in step with the evolution of the teacher labor market.

Teacher Recruitment Before 1970

In the years before 1970, the county was growing rapidly. In 1950, 814 teachers were employed by the district. This figure doubled by 1955 and continued to grow rapidly. In 1960, 2,916 teachers were employed and the number reached 6,221 in 1970. Nearly 1,500 teachers were hired during the 1969-70 school year. This school year was near the end of the teacher shortage period produced by the baby boom. Because the demand for teachers was high at a time when the supply of teachers was relatively low, the personnel office concentrated on recruitment.

The district recruited teachers through three sources: (1) the college recruitment program, (2) the student teacher recruitment program, and (3) applicants who approached the school district directly.

The college recruitment program recruited students at 125 colleges in 21 states during 1969-70. In addition to on-campus recruiting, Montgomery County hosted the annual College Placement Officials Conference. This ongoing activity served to establish a closer relationship between the school district and college and university placement officials. Also, personnel office staff contacted prospective teachers regularly through professional organizations (such as the American Association of School Personnel Administrators and the Association of School, College, and University Staffing), teacher organizations (such as the National Education Association), and social activist organizations (such as the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People and the Peace Corps). Finally, advertisements were placed in a variety of journals and newspapers. The college recruitment program in 1969-70 netted 1,239 applications, 258 offers, and 182 new hires.

Although the student teacher recruitment program was slightly smaller than the college recruitment program, it was equally productive for the district. During the 1969-70 school year, 830 students from 12 colleges and universities completed their student teaching in the Montgomery County Public Schools. While participating in the program, student teachers were informed of employment opportunities and procedures in Montgomery County. Personal interviews were scheduled for each student teacher recommended for employment (except in those fields where there were many more candidates than positions available). Contract offers were presented to 257 of the 374 prospective teachers who applied, and 229 of these were accepted. In addition, 17 Master of Arts in Teaching students completed their internship in the district and later were hired as full-time teachers. Although fewer applications were received from this program than from the college recruitment program, there was a "higher yield" from the student teacher program. Because these applicants had already become familiar and comfortable with the district, and because their on-the-job performance was proven, employment offers and acceptances were more easily accomplished.

Although many teachers were employed through these recruitment programs, most new teachers in Montgomery County applied through other avenues and were employed after approaching the school district directly. Applicants came through several sources: other school systems; referrals by government, private, and professional placement agencies; referrals by district employees and county residents; and referrals by college placement directors and professors. In 1969-70, this wide net produced 3,696 applications, 577 employment offers, and 460 new hires.[3]

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[3] All figures are from "Departmental Progress Report on Professional Personnel, September 1, 1969-August 31, 1970," Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD, December 8, 1970.

Finally, to induce teachers in the short supply fields (e.g., industrial arts, mathematics, science, and special education) to become teachers in Montgomery County, the district uncoupled beginning salaries. Teachers in these fields were offered the additional salary incentive of starting above the first step on the scale. This was a successful strategy and all vacancies were filled by the opening of school in September 1969.

Teacher Selection in the 1970s

In 1970, the personnel staff reported that the district's recruitment and employment efforts had had their intended effect. A 1970 departmental progress report noted that:

> The time has come in public education when recruitment activities . . . can be somewhat reduced and more effort and attention given to the selection and assignment stages of the selection process.[4]

Thus, the 1970s saw a curtailment of the district's recruiting efforts and an expansion of the district's selection efforts. The present structured interview and the testing programs emerged from this new emphasis.

In part, the district's shift in emphasis was a result of the development of a teacher surplus in the 1970s. In addition, during this period, several other factors affected the recruitment and selection process in Montgomery County--each reducing either the district's need or its capacity to engage in wide-ranging recruitment activities. During the 1970s, the district began hiring fewer new teachers, the teaching staff became more stable, and the personnel office was beset with increasing complex internal constraints.

Throughout the decade, annual hiring needs decreased steadily from a peak of 1,449 teachers hired in 1969 to 460 in 1980 and a low of 189 in 1982 (see Fig. 2). This decline, coupled with a nationwide surplus of teachers in most subject areas, allowed the district to be far more

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[4] Ibid.

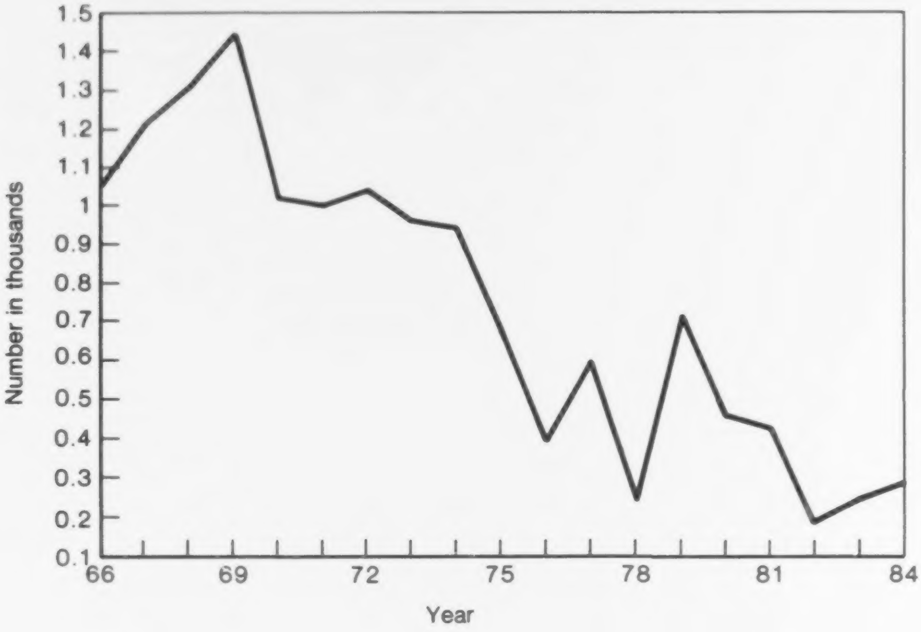

Fig. 2—Number of new hires, by year

selective in hiring, choosing experienced rather than new teachers and examining qualifications more closely.

Whereas during the late 1960s and early 1970s about half of all new hires were inexperienced teachers, by 1979 fewer than a third of the new teachers hired had no previous teaching experience. This change in hiring tactics contributed to the decline in teacher attrition rates over the decade, since new teachers generally have much higher attrition than veteran teachers.

Relieved of the need to fill large numbers of vacancies each year, the district concentrated its hiring efforts on improving the overall representation of minority teachers, women in administrative positions, and male teachers in the elementary schools. As the county demographics shifted during this period, the personnel office also had to expend more time reassigning teachers among schools with changing student enrollments. In addition to involuntary transfers as a result of school closings and declining enrollments, many experienced teachers were returning from leave or requesting transfers to other schools. In 1978, the number of teachers returning from leave (160) and internal transfers (1,169) greatly exceeded the number of new hires (249). This pattern has continued into the 1980s and has increased the administrative burden of managing the internal labor market for both personnel staff who process the paperwork and principals who reconfigure their staffs to accommodate transfers.

The Interview and Testing Programs

From the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, Montgomery County continued to emphasize the screening aspects of its selection process. As mentioned above, the current structured interview and testing programs emerged from this new emphasis.

In the mid-1970s, district testing staff, along with a committee of teachers and principals, developed a centrally administered structured interview that reflects the district's view of effective teaching characteristics. The interview assesses indicators of seven characteristics: empathy, adjustability, role innovation, objectivity, teaching drive, democratic orientation, and firmness. These characteristics reflect the committee's concern with teachers' attitudes toward teaching and sensitivity to the needs of students. The interview questions often entail hypothetical questions about what the prospective teacher would do in certain teaching situations, such as an encounter with a belligerent student. The interviewer ranks the response according to an expected response that is balanced, not too extreme, and flexible. New interviewers are trained by sitting in on interviews conducted by a veteran staffing specialist and are coached on how to administer and score the interview.

Paper-and-pencil tests of subject knowledge are also administered to "provide a valid, nondiscriminatory, comprehensive basis for selecting applicants with the highest probability of continued success in the district and for screening out persons who are not qualified for positions." In 1972, the first proficiency test, the *Test of English*

Mechanics, was implemented. This commercially produced, multiple-choice test is administered to prospective English teachers to assess their knowledge of diction, grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling. Beginning in 1974, tests of writing, listening, and speaking skills were required of applicants for Spanish, French, and German teaching positions.

In 1976, MCPS examined the *National Teachers Examination - Commons Exam (NTE-CE)* for possible use for screening early childhood and elementary teacher candidates. Although the test was found to be a valid screening measure, the inherent problems with implementing the program were deemed unacceptable. The Educational Testing Service (ETS), publisher of the NTE-CE, administers this test a limited number of times per year and test results can take up to six weeks to reach employers. Considering this problem of timing, a decision was made not to use the NTE-CE. Instead, it was concluded that "An internally-developed and supervised program would make it possible for [the district] to use an instrument designed to reflect the teaching subject-matter requirements of our curriculum; to test teacher candidates at our discretion and to have test results immediately; to offer retest to candidates scoring low on an initial testing; and to report test scores in a manner which provides maximum information both for selection and assignment."[5] Therefore, the district developed its own tests--the first being the *Elementary and Early Childhood Test*. This test assesses English language skills and knowledge of mathematics, science, and social studies. It is a 100-item, multiple-choice exam, 25 items for each major subject area. The district administers this exam to all elementary school candidates.

Later, a secondary school teacher's test was designed to assess the English language and math knowledge of secondary school applicants. The tests, developed by secondary school teachers, curriculum coordinators, and an assessment specialist, contain primarily multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank items.

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[5] *The Elementary and Early Childhood Teacher Selection Study.*

The English subtest contains items testing knowledge and skills for: (1) assessing word characteristics (such as spelling, parts of speech, and vocabulary), (2) detecting errors (such as misplaced modifiers, nonparallel construction, and subject-verb agreement), and (3) detecting correct formatting (such as editing paragraphs). The mathematics subtest contains items testing knowledge and skills for: (1) adding, subtracting, dividing, and multiplying whole numbers, fractions, and decimals, (2) solving percent, ratio, and proportion problems, (3) solving basic geometric problems, (4) reading graphs and tables, (5) interpreting test scores, and (6) computing grades.

The secondary teacher's test was validated using a criterion-related validation strategy with currently employed secondary teachers serving as study participants. Of 1,000 teachers randomly identified for participation, 134 teachers volunteered and were paid to participate in the validation study. Raters completed a job performance instrument developed specifically for the validation study so that the test scores of the study participants could be related to their performance evaluations.

The job performance evaluation included nine dimensions of teacher performance: (1) classroom management; (2) pupil-teacher relations; (3) professional attitude and conduct; (4) preparation and planning; (5) knowledge of the subject matter; (6) public relations; (7) techniques of instruction; (8) pupil evaluation; and (9) personal factors. Two raters rated each participating teacher's job performance--the school principal and one other school administrator. According to district staff, interrater reliability of the two raters' evaluations for the teachers was quite high. The validity of the test was determined by measuring the relationship of test score performance to rated job performance. The district concluded that the secondary teacher's test was a valid tool for secondary teacher selection. Further analyses indicated that the test did not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, or school level assignment.

Teacher Selection in the 1980s

As Montgomery County's selection tools were expanding, the labor market was swinging back in the other direction. The large number of teachers seeking employment had peaked by the mid-1970s. In the 1973-74 academic year, the district received 6,981 applications for teaching positions. By 1979-80, the number of applications decreased to 3,102. In 1984, only 2,141 prospective teachers applied to the district. Although the teacher surplus of the 1970s began to dissipate, MCPS achieved considerable success in its teacher selection program.

By the early 1980s, Montgomery County had increased its percentage of minority teachers, lowered its teacher attrition rates, and employed more teachers who had earned at least a master's degree. In 1971, 35 percent of all Montgomery County teachers had earned a master's degree. By 1984, 57.2 percent had a master's degree and 1.3 percent had a doctorate.[6] Fewer teachers were applying. Yet, teachers were more highly trained, more stable (except for inexperienced teachers), and more representative of an increasingly diverse student body.

However, although the teacher surplus was dwindling, Montgomery County modified its college recruitment program to target only specific institutions and had discontinued its student teacher program. Thus, market trends in combination with a lessened emphasis on teacher recruitment and an enhanced emphasis on stringent selection procedures created a situation where the teacher candidate pool was shrinking--faster in some subject areas than others.

The logistics of the selection process also became more difficult as the district changed dramatically over the years. In addition to the large number of personnel transactions, the addition of more screening tools made the process more cumbersome and time-consuming. An archaic data management system made all of this refined information on candidates difficult to access, and questions about the utility of some screening measures began to emerge. At the time of this study, some administrators believed that the tests had prevented the district from hiring some good candidates. A score below the cut-off score on one test would prevent a candidate from being considered further. Subsequently, as will be discussed below, a formula was developed (one giving a combined score for the tests, the structured interview, the reference score for professional components, the principals' interview, and GPA in the major field) to assess the overall quality of applicants. This strategy, by balancing qualifications, could alleviate the effects of a rigid cut-off score and presumably could enlarge the field of eligible candidates. Such flexibility will be necessary if the labor market tightens further. The challenge to teacher recruitment and selection in Montgomery County today is recruiting an adequate number of qualified candidates who pass a rigorous selection process.

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[6] This high level of educational attainment is partly the result of a Maryland law requiring all teachers to acquire a master's degree within their first 10 years of teaching to maintain certification.

However, the selection process does not end with the hiring and placement of new teachers. The selection process also includes the initial experiences of new hires--experiences that shape the success or failure of beginning teachers and their probability of remaining in teaching.

CURRENT SELECTION PRACTICES

Current teacher selection practices in the Montgomery County Public Schools include a modest recruitment program, a centrally administered screening process, and the hiring of teachers by school principals. Thus, district teacher selection practices constitute a division of labor which (in theory) has the Central Office recruiting and screening applicants and principals selecting from a small number of eligible candidates.

Properly operating such a system balances efficiency and equity concerns and enforces district standards while allowing school autonomy. At its best, the approach allows principals to shape their faculties--and to assume full responsibility for new hires--while saving them time and energy by recruiting and conducting first-stage screening centrally in a manner that ensures fair and equal treatment of candidates. As we describe below, such a balance of responsibilities is not always easy to create and maintain in any organization. It becomes especially challenging in times of relative shortage of candidates.

Recruiting

During the 1981-82 school year, personnel staff visited 70 colleges and universities in nine states, primarily nearby in the District of Columbia, Delaware, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The district has also continued to attend regional consortia and national conferences. The district's recruiting has concentrated on high demand subject areas (such as science, mathematics, and special education) and high demand teachers (such as minority teachers). Historically black institutions accounted for 14 percent of colleges and universities visited in 1981-82.[7] National conferences are used primarily to recruit minority teachers.

If personnel staff "find" high demand candidates early in the "recruiting season," then "open contracts" may be offered. By offering an open contract, the district will hire a candidate early in the year and later place him or her in the most appropriate vacancy. During the period of declining student enrollments, administrators felt that this was a recruiting strategy the district could not afford to pursue. (Only five open contracts were offered in 1984.) Since vacancies are not known until much later in the year and principals have (at least theoretically) final hiring authority, the district risks the possibility of hiring teachers whom they cannot place.

Because of a combination of increasing enrollment in the elementary grades, expected retirements and attrition, and program improvements authorized by the board, the county expects to hire approximately 600 new teachers annually over the next five years, as compared to only about 200 a couple of years ago. This will require a shift in emphasis and resources for recruitment and selection to compete on a large scale in a more competitive labor market for teachers.

However, since our visit, the county has reinstituted a much more aggressive recruitment campaign, which includes visits to a larger number of college campuses and the authority to offer open contracts to a significant number of promising candidates in high demand areas. In addition to beefing up its recruitment efforts, the county has just negotiated a substantial salary increase for beginning teachers (to $19,000), which is nearly as high as other districts' salaries in the surrounding area. These efforts in the spring of 1986 resulted in the early hiring of more than 100 new teachers, of whom nearly 40 percent are minority candidates.

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[7] "Montgomery County Public Schools: A Management Study of Personnel Policies and the Department of Personnel Services," Rockville, MD, March 1983, p. IV-4.

Those who do apply to the district receive a packet of information that includes the following: a cover letter requesting the forwarding of college transcripts; reference forms; an application for employment with an attached file card requiring name, address, education, experience, and field; a school preference form; a brochure describing the district; a brochure describing the testing program with sample questions; and the district's salary schedule. Applications for teaching positions are filed with the personnel department. Along with the application form, a completed file includes college transcripts, professional references, and state certification.

Screening

In Montgomery County, staff specialists within the personnel department screen applicants. During the screening process, the staffing specialists: (1) review applicants' certification status, credentials, and experience; (2) conduct the structured interview and administer tests; and (3) assess applicants' qualifications and skills. Upon completion of this process, the staffing specialists refer applicants to principals for their consideration.

This three-step process enables the district to maintain standards, use resources more efficiently, and treat all applicants, candidates, teachers, and principals evenhandedly. Most teachers and principals recognize the benefits of the district's centralized screening process. Staff specialists provide considerable assistance to candidates, teachers, and principals alike. However, during the course of our study, we found problems associated with the screening process indicating that the system was not working as intended. These problems were not unnoticed by district staff. Montgomery County, a highly self-evaluative and data-conscious school district, analyzes its operations and attempts to overcome its problems. The remaining portion of this section describes the three-step screening process--in terms of its benefits, limitations, and corrections-in-progress.

1. *The personnel department processes the application.* This process entails determining state certification status, ensuring that all required materials have been received, and assessing credentials and teaching experience.

The State of Maryland issues certifications but has authorized the district to act as its agent in reviewing records and determining qualifications for certification. If an applicant does not have previous certification, an MCPS certification specialist reviews the college transcript to make a determination. In 1984, certification specialists reviewed the files of 1,000 prospective candidates from out of state and in state. Unfortunately, many teachers certified in other states and some in-state college graduates have difficulty meeting certification requirements. In some cases, the State of Maryland requires an "arcane" college course that an out-of-state teacher has not taken. In other cases, a state teacher education program's curriculum is not well articulated with state certification requirements. In some fields like special education, changing state certification requirements have created substantial problems, since they are so disjunct from common teacher education practices.

The personnel department has two staffing teams that assess an applicant's credentials and teaching experience. Each team has responsibility for two district geographic areas. There are two staffing specialists for each team. The staffing specialists are assigned the responsibility for screening applicants for specific types of positions. The staffing specialist reviewing the applicant file determines whether to invite the applicant for an interview.

This organizational arrangement enables the district to sort through the 2,000 applications annually. However, during this initial stage of the process, both principals and teachers have become frustrated with several aspects of the process--frustrations directed toward the personnel office's management of information and handling and treatment of applicants.

First, at the time of this study, the personnel office's management information system had frustrated principals in at least two ways. Applicant folders were arranged according to subject area and stacked on a large table in the center of the office. This prevented applicants from being cross-referenced by more than one teaching field or by their extracurricular skills and interests. Principals lamented that this was a "primitive" and "archaic" form of managing important information about applicants. A consequence of this "archaic" management information system has been that applicants could be considered for only one subject area position at a time. Thus, a highly qualified candidate certified in both math and science could not be considered for both types of positions at the same time. Furthermore, only one staffing specialist or principal could handle a given file at one time, making information about the candidate inaccessible to others trying to fill similar positions. At the same time, since staffing teams are organized by geographic area (rather than by type of school or subject area), different staffing specialists would be attempting to place the same applicants. A consequence of this organizational arrangement has been that staffing teams compete with each other for candidates. Thus, in some cases, a lack of cooperation has prevailed among the staffing teams.

The personnel office's management of information also has frustrated teachers. As applicants, many teachers were "frustrated" and "annoyed" by the abundance of paperwork required during the screening process. More important, more than a few teachers found that the personnel office had lost their entire file folders. Teachers voiced concern that these district practices may discourage some candidates from pursuing their applications.

Administrators in Montgomery County are aware of these problems and are developing a management information system. Presently, the district is implementing a computer-based applicant tracking system. This system is intended to solve the district's data and personnel management problems--problems that beset virtually every large school system in the United States.

The computerized system can solve these data and personnel management problems by facilitating the storage, updating, and retrieval of information. Applicants can now be filed under three subject areas with information about teaching and extracurricular preferences and qualifications available in their computer record. Thus, with the new management information system, the staffing specialist can better: (1) assess an applicant's qualifications and skills, (2) apprise applicants of their status, (3) share information with their colleagues, and (4) inform principals of the best available candidates.

Second, in some cases, the personnel office's treatment of applicants has frustrated teachers who felt that Central Office staff demonstrated little regard for their time and experience as professional educators. Because the personnel office would not notify some applicants of their status, only the persistent candidates who telephoned the personnel office regularly could discover whether their files were complete and they were being considered for a job. However, in telephoning the personnel office, some applicants found that staff members "were just not nice" to them.

Others were frustrated that the personnel office could not always value an applicant's teaching experience and credentials. On some occasions, the personnel office would discourage applicants with considerable teaching experience and credentials from applying (e.g., those holding a master's degree), because the district was under pressure to reduce expenditures for teachers' salaries. A ceiling imposed by the County Council on average beginning teachers' salaries created disincentives for considering well-educated and highly experienced candidates. Though a strict ceiling no longer exists, the district still limits the salary credit that can be given for previous experience and education. This is a problem recognized by personnel administrators who would like more flexibility in hiring teachers, particularly in shortage areas.

2. *Upon review of applicants' experience and credentials, staffing specialists determine who will be interviewed and tested.* This determination is based on the candidate's college record and references, evidence of successful previous teaching experience, and eligibility for

certification. Since the mid-1970s, staffing specialists have interviewed and tested approximately 40-50 percent of all applicants.

As noted above, the structured interview was developed in the 1970s by the district to formalize and centralize this aspect of the screening process. Staffing specialists trained to administer the interview in a standardized manner have served as the district's interviewers. The interview score is taken into account with a variety of other factors. Generally, if an applicant receives a low score, he or she will not be referred to a local school.

Most newly hired teachers we interviewed felt that the structured interview was an appropriate tool to screen applicants. However, some believed that the interview was "too cold, too general, and mechanical." Given that the structured interview assesses only directly the interpersonal skills of applicants, some teachers felt that this centrally administered screening tool was not adequate. As one teacher noted, "I did not leave the structured interview with the feeling that the Central Office knew me, what I could do, or how I could teach."

The testing program was also developed to better assess the academic qualifications of applicants. Given the limited quality control by colleges and schools of education, the district's testing program contributes significantly to the screening process. Indeed, the district's series of subject area tests do provide a further check on an applicant's academic qualifications. Both principals and teachers see the tests as serious examinations because they believe the cut-off scores are "high" and the test items are "rather difficult."

Although the testing program has its benefits, it may also have its limitations. From the perspective of some principals and teachers, the testing program may not provide the most valid assessment of an applicant's subject matter knowledge and how this knowledge relates to teaching. Principals and teachers question the tests' validity on two counts. First, since all secondary teachers must take a test that covers several content areas, a high school French teacher applicant may be removed from the employment pool because of a poor performance on the math portion of the test. Second, some teachers felt that the tested material was fairly arcane and not reflective of the main body of knowledge in a field. For example, the English test emphasizes knowledge of grammatical terms and rules and does not require a writing sample which would allow the candidate to reflect communication skill and writing ability.

Whether because of the tests' limitations or the candidates', numerous applicants had to take the test several times before being hired. Some otherwise qualified applicants refused to take it more than once and were hired by other school districts. Thus, not surprisingly, both administrators and teachers lamented that "while the tests tell us something, they sometimes get in the way and prevent the hiring of good people."

3. *The personnel office refers candidates to school principals.* Before the testing program, staffing specialists would examine interview results, college transcripts, and reference forms to determine whether to refer an applicant to a local school to fill a vacancy. This screening process provided the opportunity for trained Central Office staff to be flexible and to assess the applicants in a holistic fashion. Though these assessments continued to be made after the tests were instituted, they became less important when passing scores were a prerequisite for hiring. In the heyday of the testing program, the test score cut-off assumed great weight.

However, at the time of this study, the district had begun to implement a new assessment technique to complement the computer-based applicant tracking system. This technique standardizes and quantifies the assessment of an applicant's qualifications and skills through the use of a hiring code. It incorporates test results with other factors, removing the cut-off score requirement, and allowing fuller consideration of a range of indicators. Components of the hiring code have been weighted according to findings from research conducted by the personnel office. The components and their weights are as follows: structured interview (.30), elementary/secondary tests (.30), professional reference items (.20), grades in subject applied for (.10), grades in other subjects (.05), and personal traits reference items (.05).

District administrators gave the greatest weight to those components believed to best predict teacher effectiveness. The district tested the hiring code's predictive ability by asking four secondary principals to evaluate the 20 teachers they hired (in their schools) over the last three years. Analysis of the principals' ratings and the hiring codes yielded a .76 rank-order correlation coefficient.

The hiring code can range from a perfect score of 0.00 to a poor score of 20.00 (an average score would be 10.00). At the beginning of the employment season, the Department of Personnel Services establishes a cut-off score of 5.00 for authorizing open contracts. Most new teachers receiving open contracts had hiring codes of 3.00 or less. Later in the summer, principals are permitted to consider candidates with codes between 5.00 and 10.00 if the candidate's employment could be justified on the basis of program considerations.

Hiring

The screening and referral system is designed to provide principals with a manageable number of well-qualified candidates from which to choose. Some principals have developed positive working relationships with a staffing specialist who gets to know their needs well. For these principals, the screening and referral system works well.

However, many principals do not rely solely on the Central Office for referrals. Principals may seek out candidates to hire familiar teachers--from among those who would like to transfer from other schools or those who have student taught in the county--or because they have difficulty getting referrals from the Central Office of candidates who fit their schools or vacancy requirements. There are many reasons why principals seek their own candidates and many ways in which they find the kinds of teachers they desire.

First, principals are constrained in the hiring process by the growing shortages of qualified teachers. Several principals we interviewed told us that when they requested referrals from the personnel office for social studies vacancies, they were told there were no candidates at all in the applicant pool. Whether this was because the openings were unexpected and hence no recruitment had been conducted, or because the files had been misplaced, the end result was a tremendous scrambling about to fill those vacancies. At one school we visited, virtually the entire social studies department, aside from the resource teacher, was staffed by a combination of part-time teachers,

teachers from other departments teaching out of field, and recruits who had sought employment in earlier years but who were not found qualified at that time.

Shortages of math and science teachers obviously reduced selectivity in the hiring of applicants. Several principals and staffing specialists asserted that they would seize upon any adequately prepared math teacher without further scrutiny to fill their vacancies. The district's earlier effort to retrain elementary teachers to teach junior high school mathematics was successful in filling vacancies, but according to a department head who had to rely on this source of candidates for virtually all vacancies, few of these teachers were able to handle classes above the level of general mathematics. As a consequence, he had to teach most of the upper level courses himself while trying to work with the other teachers as much as possible to teach them the subject matter for such courses as they might eventually be able to teach. Some sections of courses could not be offered with the staff available.

Although science teachers were not in as great demand, they were in equally short supply. One department head told us that he was reluctant to give an honest evaluation to a newly hired science teacher who was having difficulty, since he had had such difficulty finding anyone to take the position initially, and the prospects of finding another candidate if the first resigned were so dim.

Second, principals are constrained in the hiring process by administrative policies that dictate that all teachers in the internal transfer pool be placed in their new assignments before the selection of new teachers.

In Montgomery County, this pool has grown dramatically over the last decade--to approximately 1,000 internal transfer placements per year. Not only are there more transfers to place than new hires, but there are three distinct categories of transfers--involuntary, employees returning from leave, and voluntary. Each of these transfer categories requires separate placement efforts by the Central Office at various times during the school year. Because of the size of this internal pool, all transfers generally are not placed until July or later. As a consequence, principals may not choose their own candidates because:

- The Central Office requires principals to first fill vacancies from the internal transfer pool.
- The emptying of the pool is a lengthy process and many candidates have accepted offers from other districts by the time principals can hire.

Third, principals are constrained in the hiring process by the occasional lack of effective communication between the Central Office and the school. This ineffective communication manifested itself in several ways. Many principals complained about unanswered telephone calls and lack of clear information regarding the hiring of prospective teachers. In some cases, the personnel staff did not contact candidates that principals wanted to hire. Consequently, those candidates went elsewhere to teach. In other cases, the personnel office referred candidates who were not a "good fit" for a particular school. For example, principals reported that they were referred candidates who lived beyond commuting distance from their schools or who desired another type of teaching position. Still in other cases, the personnel office would report to principals that no candidates were available when there were some, in fact, who had either escaped notice or who were *assumed* to be unavailable. One principal related this story:

> I needed a half-time teacher. Personnel could not find any candidates. My assistant principal went to Central Office and found nine names. We interviewed four candidates. One candidate had not been called because he was too far away (out-of-state). I called and found he was willing to come even for a half-time position. I now share this teacher with another school.

Thus, because of inadequate communication between the Central Office and the school, principals may not be able to choose the candidates they desire. However, most principals who had these communication problems with the Central Office recognized that their problems may reflect an "understaffed" personnel office. (In fact, the personnel office was cut back during the 1970s when hiring was less important.) Many of these difficulties are far more apparent and problematic in those areas where teacher shortages are becoming acute.

Because internal transfer policies, logistical problems, and inadequate communications may result in the referral of teachers who do not meet the needs of particular schools or a lack of appropriate referrals, principals are known to "go through machinations" to find candidates and to hire their preferred candidates. For many principals, the "preferred" candidates are the ones whom they "know" and who are selected through an informal recruiting process.

The transfer pool operates as a welcome source of candidates for principals who have relatively few vacancies to fill and who prefer to hire experienced MCPS teachers. Most principals prefer to hire individuals who have previous teaching experience and who have a known track record. For those who have the luxury of low teacher turnover and stable enrollments, it is possible to find good candidates for a few openings from the internal transfer pool by fashioning the characterization of the vacancy to match the skills of transferring teachers whom the principal would like to recruit. If the school is viewed as attractive by teachers in the county--by virtue of its location, administrative leadership, resources, and student characteristics--a principal may successfully recruit teachers who are voluntarily transferring from schools that are less attractive or less convenient for them.

For principals who have a large number of vacancies to fill, the transfer pool is seen as a double-edged sword. Though some suitable candidates may be found and recruited from the pool, the principal may also have to accept transfers who have been "counseled out" of another school before being allowed to hire new candidates.

To avoid less desirable teachers from the internal transfer pool, principals may hire a more preferred teacher by delaying the posting of vacancies, thus preventing the placement of internal transfers in their schools during the late spring and summer. To do so, principals may request that their resigning teachers submit their resignations during mid-summer. By this time, principals may have manipulated those teachers they know--student teachers, substitute teachers, and "persistent" applicants--into the vacancy. This "delay tactic" lessens the chance that principals will be forced to hire from the internal transfer pool and enhances the chance that they will be able to select "familiar" teachers.

Principals' manipulation of "known" candidates into vacancies may compensate for the inadequate communications that can occur between the Central Office and the school; it may also override judgments already made by the personnel office. Principals are known to "hire" teachers who were eliminated previously from the applicant pool by the personnel office. A principal explained how a candidate can be manipulated into a vacancy:

> I once hired an experienced teacher who at first had difficulty with the personnel office. She was an elementary teacher who applied to the district after her husband got a job [in Washington, D.C.]. She received a letter from the personnel office that they were not going to interview her because she had too much experience and a master's degree. However, we got her an appointment as a long-term substitute. Later, she interviewed as a substitute at another school and was offered a contract by the principal. This is not an uncommon backdoor route into a full-time position. Screening by the Central Office was completed after the fact.

This description exemplifies a crucial factor in the hiring process. Teachers emphasized emphatically the importance of the "school connection" in the final hiring decision. Given the fact that principals prefer to hire those "whom (they) know," this is not surprising. Preferred candidates include those who have student taught or substituted in a district school or who are transferring with good references from another school. In fact, some teachers assert that for those not already in the system "the only way to get a job is to be a substitute." This will undoubtedly be less true as surpluses are less commonplace and recruitment becomes more wide-ranging.

In their preference for student teachers or substitutes, principals are able to learn a great deal about these candidates--including how they actually teach--before hiring them. First, principals "get to know" candidates in at least two other ways. Principals learn about candidates from other principals and teachers--those who are in their informal network. By "trading information" and "making deals" with other principals, trusted assessments can be made about candidates before to selection. Second, principals learn about candidates who "come to them." Teachers assert that to get hired in the district applicants "must not wait on a call" from the Central Office but must go directly to principals. Through personal and persistent contact, candidates make themselves known to principals. In turn, principals "get to know" these candidates better than others. Principals tend to select the candidates who are the most "aggressive." Perhaps "aggressive" candidates prove to principals that they "really want to teach."

As noted, the district's recruitment efforts were curtailed in response to an ever-increasing pool of applicants who approached the school system directly. Many applicants who "recruited" themselves to Montgomery County lived in the area and knew the schools well. As a consequence, many of these "recruits" would agree to work only at particular schools--those with *good* working conditions. Thus, a principal's leadership ability, the students' academic motivations, and community support--all *good* working conditions that teachers seek--greatly influence a school's capacity to "recruit" new teachers.

Principals in attractive schools believe that these "informal recruiting" strategies allow them to hire those who best meet their needs. However, the informal internal labor market does not work equally well to the advantage of all schools.

Principals in schools that are not conveniently located, have fewer resources for teachers, or have more difficult student populations have to rely more on the formal recruitment and referral process to secure an adequate number of promising candidates. Sometimes they also require "protection" from the Central Office or area office staff from the dumping of weak teachers who are being pushed out of other schools.

Despite their different circumstances, principals in Montgomery County tend to look for the same type of teachers--those who are committed, have a high degree of interpersonal skills, and are sensitive to diverse parent, student, and school demands. Principals (especially at the elementary school level) believe that interpersonal skills are "more important than content-area" skills. Principals tend to believe that "attitudes strongly relate to teaching performance" and that they "can't rely on paper credentials." Thus, certain teacher qualities are sought:

> Nurturing . . . nice and caring . . . warmth and rapport . . . interest in extracurricular activities . . . .

In some schools, a desire to work with a multiethnic and diverse student population is especially important.

Principals rely on their trusted colleagues to assess whether candidates possess these interpersonal skills. However, they also rely on the school-level interview. These interviews tend to be structured, but they are designed by the principal. Some principals convene an interview team to assess candidates. This team may involve the assistant principal or a teacher (usually the school's resource teacher or curriculum coordinator).

Not all principals feel that it is important to involve other school-level staff in the selection process. Those who do, however, feel strongly that they learn a great deal more about a candidate's knowledge and teaching style by involving expert teachers in the interview process. The teachers we spoke to who had been part of the selection process were more apt to say they were looking for evidence of pedagogical skill and solid grounding in the subject area in their queries of applicants than were principals or Central Office staffing specialists. These teachers also felt a sense of ownership in both the school and in the chosen applicants as a result of having participated in their selection. Since many of the veteran teachers were those who would be responsible for supporting the new entrants once hired, their participation became in fact the start of the induction process.

If a candidate teaches in another district school, some principals will attempt to visit them in their classrooms. If this is not convenient, then some principals will take candidates to a classroom to visit students and teachers. Principals believe that they learn a great deal from observing a candidate's interaction with students. In this situation, the principal views how a candidate treats students. However, because most hiring takes place in the summer, this type of assessment cannot often be made.

Principals complete a standard evaluation form and submit a recommendation to the personnel office. A principal usually must "justify" a recommended candidate who has not "highly ranked" on the Central Office's composite index. This requirement obviously did not exist in the period preceding the use of the index. In the former period, the principal, given an unranked list of candidates, could make an appraisal unfettered by pressure from above, except for the expectation that the principal would seek well-qualified individuals who would also contribute to a racially balanced faculty. Both the Director of Staffing and the Director of Personnel must review and approve the principal's recommendation.

Induction

The district requires minimal staff development activities for new teachers, and formal support resides within each school's department head or resource teacher(s). Not all schools have resource teachers. High school departments of sufficient size qualify the school for a resource teacher slot. Elementary schools generally have no staff with released time for peer assistance, unless they are specialized magnet schools eligible for a curriculum coordinator position. In schools where this is available, new teachers sometimes meet regularly with their curriculum coordinator or resource teacher for planning and advice. New teachers benefit from their "mentors'" assistance in helping them "adjust" to the school as well as in teaching them how to teach from the district's "complex" and "voluminous" curriculum.

However, this induction support for new teachers varies from school to school. Some schools have no formal positions for providing support to other teachers. Other teachers find that their department head or resource teacher is unavailable to them because of class scheduling conflicts. Although in some cases, resource teachers are able to "give more help than needed," more often than not they do not have the time to do so. Most department heads or resource teachers have only one period a day of released time to devote to administrative duties (including induction). This is true even in those schools with the greatest numbers of new teachers. In fact, the availability of help is almost inversely related to the number of teachers needing assistance. Although the district seeks to encourage the use of senior teacher expertise in the schools, this expertise is not available to many new teachers.

EFFECTS OF THE TEACHER SELECTION PROCESS

Despite the problems and tensions in Montgomery County's teacher selection process, most Central Office personnel, principals, and teachers feel that the district's teaching staff is of high quality. Using conventional measures, this assessment holds up very well. Montgomery County teachers are certified, have good college records with high grade point averages, and have passed tests of subject matter knowledge. Most teachers are experienced and presumably capable. Finally, progress has been made toward achieving minority representation and racial balance among the teaching staff.

Although the overall assessment of the professional staff is a positive one, the consequences of certain selection procedures have resulted in considerable tension between the Central Office and principals. Many of the tensions in Montgomery County's teacher selection process are inherent in the combination of centralized recruiting and screening and decentralized hiring. The need to maintain uniform district standards is challenged by the need to provide for the particular needs of different schools. Because these tensions are built-in, they are not easily resolved.

Nonetheless, the district's recent emphasis on screening and deemphasis on recruiting will become a major problem as MCPS will have to hire significantly more teachers in the future. Thus, our analysis of the effects of Montgomery County's teacher selection processes addresses its present emphasis when confronted with current labor market trends. This analysis assesses the effects of the district's: (1) recruitment strategies, (2) screening requirements, (3) placement policies, (4) personnel management information system, and (5) induction of new teachers.

Recruitment Strategies

In the past, MCPS actively recruited student teachers. Although the district did not hire a large number of them, a high percentage of contracts offered to recruits was accepted, i.e., there was a good return rate on their efforts. An effect of a district recruiting its own student teachers is that administrators and principals have the opportunity to assess their teaching performance before offering them a contract. In fact, this recruiting practice may enhance the validity of the overall teacher selection process.

However, when student enrollments and staffing needs declined, fewer resources were devoted to active recruitment. The college recruitment and student teacher programs were allowed to falter--placing the district at a disadvantage as teacher demand increased and supply dwindled. For example, some local university teacher education programs have preferred not to place their student teachers into school districts with no organized program for student teaching. One principal lamented that the dissolution of the districts' student teacher program "closed the door" on many prospective teachers.

Screening Requirements

The district's screening requirements have become increasingly difficult to implement as the pool of available candidates has decreased. More stringent certification, interview, and testing requirements have lessened access to a shrinking labor pool. These screening requirements may be appropriate, but the status of the teacher labor market has made them increasingly difficult to implement.

Certification is the first screening requirement that applicants must meet. For some, this is an obstacle to be overcome. Two certification specialists must review numerous files. (In 1984, there were 1,000 certification files to review.) In addition, some state certification requirements are "arcane" and both out-of-state and some in-state candidates may have difficulty in becoming eligible to teach. Although it is possible to obtain various sorts of waivers of full certification requirements, as other Maryland districts do, MCPS has chosen to require full standard certification of all of its hires. This is increasingly viewed as a barrier to hiring some otherwise qualified applicants. As one administrator noted, "Frequently, teachers are qualified, but they just don't meet certification requirements." Certification is a "barrier" that many administrators believe does not "relate to teaching performance."

The structured interview is the next screening requirement that applicants must meet. Although few administrators or teachers felt that this requirement is an absolute barrier, candidates may not be referred to a local school if they score poorly on the structured interview. At present, the interview accounts for approximately one-third of a candidate's composite score. Even though candidates may be well-qualified (high grades and test scores), they may lose their "top ranking" with a poor interview score. Principals have difficulty in hiring candidates who are not highly ranked on the personnel office's composite index.

Although a few administrators and teachers voiced concerns regarding the effects of certification and the structured interview, by far they voiced the most concern about the testing program. In the past, the district required a minimum cut-off score on the test to be considered for employment as a teacher. At present, the test accounts for approximately one-third of a candidate's composite score. Administrators and teachers believe that both these requirements may cause the district to lose otherwise qualified candidates. For example, among the newly hired teachers we interviewed, several had to take the test two to three times before being hired. Other candidates became "frustrated" by the test, refused to take it more than once, and were hired by other districts. Many of these candidates were considered by administrators to be "good" teachers.

To be sure, this screening requirement eliminates unqualified applicants from the pool. Some administrators felt that the test was an important indicator of later teaching effectiveness and should be used in "lieu of college grades" and certification. In fact, these administrators' distrust of candidates' college academic records and certification led them to place a great deal of confidence in the district's testing program. However, many administrators and teachers questioned the validity of the testing program--i.e., the nature of test content and its relationship to knowledge or teaching performance. Thus, many administrators believe that the test "gets in the way" and results in the district "missing good teachers."

Concern about the testing program was undoubtedly caused by the fact that the test cut-off scores posed an inflexible barrier to hiring at a time when shortages of teachers were beginning to affect the district's candidate pool. It is also possible that some candidates' inability to pass the test on their initial attempts reflected a decline in the average academic ability of candidates. In any event, the need to fill vacancies resulted in efforts by staffing specialists to encourage many retakes on the test for those who were initially unsuccessful.

Placement Policies

Teacher placement policies seem to affect the selection process as much as (or more than) deemphasized recruitment strategies, more stringent screening requirements, and fewer numbers of applicants. Our case study reveals that teacher placement policies affect the timing of the selection and the relative advantages of different schools competing for candidates in the internal labor market.

Local policy that mandates the placement of internal transfers before new teachers can be hired slows the selection process considerably. Since the mid-1970s, the number of internal transfers has exceeded the number of new hires by a ratio of two or three to one. Approximately 1,000 teachers transferred within the district over each of the last several years. Therefore, placement of transfers consumes an ever-increasing portion of personnel office and principals' resources. Not only are more resources devoted to internal transfers, but these placements delay selection decisions regarding new hires. In fact, it is difficult to determine what vacancies need to be filled by new hires until transfers have been placed. During the time it takes to place 1,000 transfers, potential new hires are accepting jobs from other districts. Indeed, Montgomery County has "lost out" to other area school districts that hire early.

Schools that have greater staff stability and lower hiring demands are affected less by the high mobility of the internal transfer pool. Thus, schools with lower teacher turnover, stable student enrollments, and few program changes are not burdened with the time-consuming selection process associated with internal transfer placements. In Montgomery County, internal transfer placements have different effects on different types of schools. Senior teachers, who voluntarily request to be transferred, tend to request moves to more desirable schools. This internal mobility pattern means that more experienced (and presumably, better) teachers transferring away from "difficult" schools (i.e., schools with inadequate principal leadership, inconvenient locations, or students difficult to teach) to "good" schools (i.e., schools with convenient locations, excellent principal leadership, or students easy to teach). On the other hand, unstable student enrollments, racial imbalances among the faculty, or new programs sometimes require the involuntary transfer of teachers. These less desirable schools will generally be staffed by involuntary transfers (many of whom will not have been selected by principals who have a choice) and by new hires.

Personnel Management Information System

An effective school district personnel management system must accurately project both teacher supply and demand. In practice, predicting demand plagues individual schools more than it plagues the school district.

For example, inaccurate enrollment projections are one cause of inaccurate estimates of demand. In Montgomery County, when student enrollments were overestimated, teachers had to be "surplused" (transferred or laid off). Underestimates of student enrollments or changes in curriculum can create teacher shortages. Recently, Montgomery County added computer courses to its curriculum. However, inadequate personnel planning created a situation whereby "teachers were needed, but there was no one to recruit and hire." A similar situation occurred with the social studies curriculum. Several principals claimed that when they tried to fill social studies positions, no applicants were available. As a consequence, a number of social studies positions were filled by teachers from other fields.

An effective personnel management system must also promptly report vacancies. In Montgomery County, teachers are supposed to submit resignations or transfer requests in the early spring. However, principals who prefer to select new hires may request that teachers at their schools submit their resignations at the end of the school year, or during the summer so that there is less chance of having to hire from the transfer pool. In the meantime, this strategy decreases the ability of the Central Office to anticipate the demand for teachers. Principals may also go through the motions of interviewing candidates referred by the Central Office but may actually delay selecting a teacher to avoid undesirable candidates and instead select among new hires. This strategy also thwarts the efforts of the Central Office.

Finally, an effective personnel management system must efficiently sort through and assess applicants to select among the best available candidates. In the past, the district's "archaic" management information could not meet the demands of (1) sorting through and assessing 3,000-4,000 applications per year, and (2) identifying qualified candidates by more than one subject area, grade level, or geographic region of the county.

The district's computerized data management system will remedy many of the problems inherent in the previous manual system. Now an applicant's electronic file will always be available, can be sorted by more than one subject area, and will be available to more than one principal or staffing specialist at the same time. This effectively increases the applicant pool by picking up applicants that may have been lost under the old system.

In addition, the district's computerized data management system will enhance the personnel office's use of the composite ranking of candidates and the hire code. The ranking and hire code system standardizes the screening process and objectifies the basis for selecting the most qualified candidates. Establishment of a cut-off score enhances the influence of the personnel office and narrows the scope of judgment previously enjoyed by principals. The previous system for assessing and screening applicants allowed for flexibility and encouraged a more holistic appraisal of candidates.

Effects of the Induction of New Teachers

Despite a decrease in overall attrition rates for teachers over the past 15 years, attrition rates for first and second year teachers remain high--about 30 percent annually in recent years. This level of turnover will become more problematic if annual demand for teachers is increased by the need to fill vacancies created by teachers just hired the year before.

Newly hired teachers (including those new to the district who had taught elsewhere before) who received assistance from a resource teacher or a curriculum coordinator felt that that had improved both their orientation to the school system and their teaching effectiveness. These teachers were also more likely to say they planned to stay in the Montgomery County schools than new teachers who had not received any support. (Although area office supervisors are also supposed to assist new teachers and others who request assistance, the consensus among teachers and administrators was that these specialists were spread too thin and were too far removed from daily school life to offer more than occasional counseling.)

Not only does help for first year teachers enhance the probability of their effectiveness and retention, it is also a recruitment incentive. Several new teachers we interviewed said that they selected the school in which they were employed because they knew they would receive help and support from a curriculum coordinator or resource teacher, often the one who had interviewed them when they were seeking a job.

Given that formal support from resource teachers may improve a novice's orientation to the school system and his or her teaching effectiveness, new teacher induction may reduce the attrition of first and second year teachers. However, new teacher induction may have an even greater benefit in this present period of high teacher demand--i.e., a recruitment incentive. As noted, several new teachers we interviewed reported that they selected the school in which they were employed because of the formal support offered.

Thus, as "induction" support varies from school to school, so does the school's capacity to recruit and retain its new teachers. Although the district has no formal orientation or training or systemwide support for new teachers at the school level, the district does have differentiated staffing where expertise is recognized in resource teachers and department heads. In some schools, new teachers meet with their resource teacher or department head regularly for planning and advice. In other schools, obstacles such as scheduling conflicts prevent a new teacher from developing a productive relationship with her or his resource teacher. The expertise is in the school in one sense, but in a very real way it is not available to the new teacher.

In addition, some schools with higher teacher turnover inevitably have more new teachers. These schools tend to be those with more difficult educational problems and fewer educational resources; however, they receive the same minimum level of resources for inducting (i.e., training and supporting) and evaluating their new teachers as the "easier" schools with fewer new teachers. Because induction resources are not distributed according to need, new teachers facing more difficult educational problems are least likely to receive the necessary assistance. Without such assistance, new teachers are less likely to be successful and more likely to become frustrated and to leave teaching.

An important fact is that Montgomery County, unlike many other school districts, has expended a considerable amount of resources over the last two decades to assess their recruitment and selection processes. Montgomery County is a "data-conscious" district that attempts to plan and analyze its operations. The district has implemented selection tools that officials have anticipated to be responsive to changes in teacher supply and demand.

The need to maintain uniform district standards is countered by the need to provide for the varying particular needs of many different schools. Because these tensions are built in, they may not be as easily resolved as other problems. Indeed, it is possible that they may never be completely resolved, but instead their emphasis may only shift from time to time.

In times of teacher surplus, principals may have greater appreciation for the screening function performed by the Central Office and may feel they are getting an adequate number of qualified applicants from which to choose. Frustration is more likely in times of shortage when the Central Office is adhering to rigorous standards, and principals cannot fill vacancies. Until adjustments can be made, both costs and benefits will be realized through the division of responsibilities between the Central Office and the schools during times of changing labor market conditions.

Case Study 3

TEACHER SELECTION IN THE EAST WILLISTON UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Arthur E. Wise

INTRODUCTION

The school district of East Williston takes teacher hiring very seriously. The district undertakes a search, screening, and selection process that is equivalent to that employed by leading universities, business firms, and government agencies. It defines positions, advertises their availability, evaluates and compares candidates, and selects the best available teacher.

East Williston has a reputation for academic excellence; its reputation helps it to attract excellent teachers; but then having excellent teachers helps to maintain a reputation for academic excellence. To be sure, East Williston is populated by academically oriented parents and academically achieving students, a fact which also substantially contributes to its reputation. But in all fields of endeavor, excellent institutions are distinguished by selection procedures that result in the hiring of excellent members. In turn, those members give the institution its excellence. After a while cause and effect become hard to disentangle.

POLICY CONTEXT

East Williston's selection process is distinguished by (1) an open and wide-ranging search, (2) the active involvement of teachers, (3) actual examination of a candidate's teaching performance, (4) decentralization to the school level, and (5) the great care taken at each step.

This distinctive selection process operates in a small, wealthy suburban school district on New York's Long Island. It is one of the closest suburbs to New York City to which most residents who work commute. Residents have a high level of education and are engaged in business or the professions; many have settled in East Williston because of the school district's reputation for educational excellence.

East Williston is a comprehensive K-12 district with a K-4 primary school, a 5-7 middle school, and an 8-12 high school; there are about 1,500 students and 100 full-time teachers. A brochure inviting applications for a school principalship characterized the district:

> Students are of above average ability and motivation. They come from homes which foster academic achievement and offer much in intellectual and cultural resources.
>
> The basic emphasis of our schools is on the total development of the child: intellectually, aesthetically, and socially.
>
> An exceptionally well-qualified faculty working with relatively small classes in a variety of progressive programs, enable us to prepare our students to meet the challenges of college and community life.

East Williston has a clear and strong conception of itself.

East Williston is wealthy, even by comparison to its neighboring school districts in Nassau County.[1] Its property wealth per student places it ninth among 56 school districts; its expenditure per pupil places it fifth among the 56 districts. East Williston exerts an above average tax effort to achieve its expenditure level. East Williston's high level of expenditures translates into a relatively low student-teacher ratio, placing it thirteenth in the county. Its average teacher's salary, $32,159, is also the thirteenth highest in the county, and of course, well above the state average. Its base beginning salary is a relatively high $18,052 but most hires are experienced teachers. Although salaries are good, it is important to point out they are not the highest in the area.

East Williston students rate high on objective measures of academic performance. They received the largest percentage of New York State Regents' Scholarships in Nassau County. (These are awarded to students scoring highest on either the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT).) Nearly 33 percent of East Williston students received the scholarship; the next closest school district received 22 percent. Over 92 percent of East Williston students are college-bound. Sixth-graders earned the second-highest average reading and mathematics scores in Nassau County; only a small percentage require remedial help in reading or mathematics. In sum, East Williston is a school district whose high academic expectations for students are achieved.

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[1] Data from *Newsday*, May 22, 1984.

The district's budget is reviewed at the Annual District Meeting and Budget Vote where a high level of interest in education is traditionally demonstrated. At this "town meeting," the voters must approve the budget submitted by the Board of Education. Typically, there are modest revisions upward as citizens make quite specific proposals for additional programming or staffing. Community support for the schools creates East Williston's reputation as "a great place to teach." This reputation greatly facilitates East Williston's ability to recruit and retain teachers. Teachers "never" leave East Williston to teach in nearby districts.

A five-person elected Board of Education oversees the district. The small size of the district has resulted in a fairly basic organization. The superintendent's only assistants are in administrative and business operations; the superintendent is in charge of personnel and curriculum. Each of the three schools has its own principal. Nine curriculum associates in subject fields provide districtwide curriculum planning and coordination; most also serve as high school department chairpersons. Thus, most are high school department chairpersons who also supervise curriculum and instruction in the primary and middle schools.

There are 100 full-time teachers in the East Williston schools. The full-time teaching staff are supplemented by the curriculum associates who teach part-time and by 17 part-time and interim teachers. Although the staff are highly experienced and tenured, there has been significant turnover in recent years, most of it induced by two retirement incentive plans. Between 1980 and 1984, 43 teachers left the district. Of these, 23 retired, 12 were dismissed,[2] and eight left for other opportunities. During this period, 40 teachers were considered for tenure; 35 were awarded tenure, and five were denied it. Thus, although the district is small, it has had a major opportunity to hire staff. Moreover, the noncontinuation of 12 teachers, including the denial of tenure to five, suggests that East Williston has policies that screen out teachers after hiring as well. Continuation decisions and tenure are not automatic.

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[2] Seven of the 12 were not in full-time tenure track positions.

SELECTION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

East Williston's Superintendent of Schools, Darrell Lund, describes the personnel acquisition function as the most critical function of the superintendent. Although East Williston had always sought excellent teachers, Lund revitalized the search process several years ago when he created an early retirement incentive plan to begin to replace a faculty that was perceived as too senior. The selection strategy adopted has several elements. All searches are open and wide-ranging. Examination of teaching performance is the key means for determining whether a candidate is to be hired. Search and selection involve teachers as well as administrators and, in certain instances, parents and students. Personnel selection is taken very seriously.

Lund gives personal leadership to the personnel process, conveying to staff his belief in the importance of personnel selection. He regularly stresses the importance of high standards and expectations. "Here we insist that at the hiring stage a person exhibit the qualities of a master teacher." Part of Lund's responsibility is to set the spirit and tone within which search and selection are conducted. But Lund is also personally involved in each personnel decision. Not only does he authorize each search, he also interviews the finalist for each position. Thus, Lund not only has developed the selection policy, he also participates in selection practice.

Although the board is formally responsible for personnel appointments and the superintendent is very active, principals feel they have the dominant role. They manage the process, appointing the team and essentially making the final decision. (When the new process began, principals had to send two or three finalists to the superintendent; now they generally send only one.) The principals believe that they have more authority over personnel decisions than their peers because there is no Central Office screening. Principals believe that teacher selection is their most important responsibility. Because of the care given, principals believe that they can handle only a few searches each year.

The district does not have a written selection policy, but expected practice is well-understood and is followed so long as time permits. After the superintendent authorizes a search, responsibility falls to the hiring principal. The steps are as follows:

1. The principal appoints a team made up primarily of teachers. The first task is to describe the job.
2. An advertisement is placed in the *New York Times* (and occasionally elsewhere). At the same time, the availability of the position is made known in the district and, through word-of-mouth, around Long Island.
3. The team then screens the 150-300 application letters and resumes. Formal applications are then requested from approximately 15-20 persons.
4. These 15-20 persons are then interviewed by the team and the numbered narrowed to three or four.
5. References are then *called* and the field narrowed to one or two.
6. The team then visits the finalists' school to observe the candidate teaching and to gather information from teachers and others. Where this is not possible, the candidate is invited to East Williston to teach demonstration lessons.
7. A recommendation is then made to the superintendent who interviews the finalist or finalists.

We will consider each of the steps.

1. The principal appoints a team that consists primarily of teachers from that school. In addition, the relevant curriculum association or, in the case of elementary school vacancies, the language arts coordinator is usually a member of the team. The team describes the positions, screens the applicants, interviews those to be

considered, and observes the finalists' teaching. The starting point for a search is said to be the philosophy of the district. The East Williston Board of Education has articulated its philosophy in a statement entitled "Thoughts on the Purpose, Direction, and Character of Education." Its key objectives are to produce students who:

a. Have fundamental respect for personal health and the physical activities that can produce and sustain it.
b. Are moved to act--in the many constructive ways that growing people may--as doers, as performers, and as partners with their teammates in many areas of activity.
c. Have an awareness and respect for the differences among students and other people--differences of attitude, of orientation, of origin, of facility, of purpose, and of spirit.
d. Respond to new knowledge and new experience intensely--with joy and excitement, with solicitude and concern as appropriate.
e. Are moved to set personal standards for critical judgment in all areas of their lives. This suggests that materials studied and information acquired ought to be presented and received in such fashion that they contribute to the development of such personal standards and can be employed in the process of making judgments.

Although the district's philosophy may affect the district's selection process, the first step in a teacher search is a job description. As revealed in advertisements that appear in the *New York Times* (see the advertisement in Appendix A), there is a general set of qualifications as well as a specific set of qualifications for each position. Standards are: "in-depth strengths in one major field of study" and "strong preparation and interest in at least one related area." In addition, the system because of its small size, demands flexibility; thus, candidates are expected to have "a positive attitude toward varied assignments from year to year." Similarly, it is advantageous for candidates to have "the ability and willingness to coach and/or sponsor co-curricular activities." Finally, candidates are apprised that "constituents have high expectations of students and staff;" by implication, candidates must be prepared to deal with demanding parents and students. The general qualifications are supplemented by specific job descriptions. These are developed by the principals, usually but not always, in consultation with the team. They are substantive and straightforward. As the teams review candidates, the school district's philosophy comes into play and the general and specific qualifications take on more concrete meaning.

2. The *New York Times* advertisement plays important symbolic and real functions in East Williston's selection process. To the school's community and the school community, and potential candidates, it signals an open search publicized in the area's most prestigious newspaper.

East Williston is a small district with modest personnel needs located in one of the largest metropolitan areas in the United States; the number of practicing, trained, and prospective teachers in New York City, Long Island, and the tri-state (New York, New Jersey, Connecticut) region is very large. East Williston publicizes some vacancies in professional journals. The response is generally quite large and East Williston will receive from 200-300 responses in the more populous teaching fields to several dozen in more specialized areas.

Although East Williston conducts what some faculty caricature as a "nation-wide" search, the reality is that East Williston draws teachers mostly from Long Island. All of the new teachers interviewed for the study went to school on Long Island, worked on Long Island, or lived on Long Island. Despite the fact that the district appears to be recruiting well beyond Long Island, its recent hires have been locals. East Williston does not pay for candidate's travel, which may contribute to this pattern.

The localism in hiring might seem to suggest that placing advertisements in the *New York Times*--which reaches subscribers in New York City, New York State, New Jersey, Connecticut, and beyond--may be no more than symbolism. Yet this step (which is never skipped) plays a more than symbolic role. Seven of the eight new teachers interviewed had seen the ad. (The eighth had been an aide in the district.) More important, four of the seven knew of the vacancy only through the ad. The three others credit the ad with helping to bring the vacancy to their attention. Clearly, the ad plays an important role in helping East Williston find its staff.

Although the ad signifies the open search, East Williston teachers and administrators use informal networks to make known the availability of the position. Because East Williston teachers are satisfied with their jobs, many will recommend East Williston to their friends and their friends to the district. Because administrators have come from administrative posts in the area, they are well-connected to potential candidates. Of eight teachers interviewed for the study, three heard about their vacancies through friends. (All three had also seen the ad.)

The successful candidates all reported that they were drawn to East Williston by its "great reputation," describing it in several instances as the "ultimate" public school system. They were drawn by the community's support for the schools, parental support for education, and academically oriented students. The widespread knowledge of the district's reputation is very important in recruiting. In addition to its reputation, East Williston offers working conditions that are superior to most. There is neither cafeteria duty nor bus duty. English teachers have four classes rather than the usual five. Average class sizes are small. "There are no fights to break up," as one respondent reported.

In hiring experienced teachers, East Williston is free--unlike many districts--to place them at the step on the salary schedule dictated by their years of experience. As noted above, East Williston teachers' salaries are high but they are exceeded by many other districts in Nassau County. The salary of an inexperienced teacher with a B.A. begins at $18,052, that of a teacher with an M.A. at $20,939. East Williston's beginning salaries fall at about 67th percentile for Nassau County. Top salaries are reached after 25 years. Teachers with an M.A. receive $37,577; those with an M.A. plus 30 additional credits receive $39,266. East Williston's top salaries fall at about the 77th percentile for the county. Few inexperienced teachers have been hired in recent years. As teachers gain years of experience, East Williston's salaries gain somewhat in relation to those of neighboring districts. East Williston has emphasized steps in its schedule, to attract and retain experienced teachers.

3. After an applicant pool is complete, it must be narrowed so that a small number of applicants can be seriously considered. Persons in this group are asked to submit a formal application. The large number of applicants is apparently relatively easily reduced. In one search that yielded 400 resumes, only 20 to 40 were judged reasonable candidates. Members of the committee reported that many letters and resumes revealed poor qualifications for the job or were poorly written. From one-quarter to one-third were stock letters sent in response to advertisements. Many applicants are new graduates and are promptly dismissed from consideration. (When East Williston hires a new graduate, special circumstances introduced the candidate to the district.) Many other applicants eliminated in the initial screening are former teachers trying to return to the teaching force. "They have broken stride in their careers and so much has happened in the last ten years." "We use new approaches to writing and mathematics which take a long time for even our experienced staff to master." Although some good candidates may be lost in the initial shuffle, the district finds it efficient to reduce pools by basic decision rules. It then considers the remaining 15 or 20 seriously. To be included, a candidate's credentials must demonstrate the breadth and depth of knowledge that is expected of the position. It is this examination of paper qualifications that is the measure of subject-matter knowledge. There is no other measure of the candidate's grasp of his or her field except as revealed in interviews or in teaching.

Following the submission of formal applications, persons are interviewed. At this stage, the criteria that apply become apparent as the teams formulate and ask questions intended to determine the kind of teacher a candidate is. The formal qualifications listed above have served to limit the pool. Of those to be interviewed, some appear to have the requisite subject-matter knowledge as well as some distinguishing experience in their background.

4. Three major questions undergird the interviews. To what extent does the candidate share the school district's educational values? Is the candidate capable of performance as an independent professional? Will the candidate complement the strengths already present in the

faculty? One area that tends not to be covered is subject matter. "Subject-matter competence is assumed" for those who have survived the cut to be interviewed.

At this stage, according to one teacher, candidates "have recommendations, experience, grades--what we must do is make a subjective leap based upon an appraisal of personality factors." When teachers speak of personality factors, they implicitly incorporate educational approaches, attitudes, skills. "They look for people like themselves--people who share their values--people who will admire them," said one informant. Very important is the candidate's perceived rapport with students. "This is judged by details about how they describe how they relate to students." "We look for a person with a commitment to students."

At its best, the interview process goes to the heart of educational philosophy:

> I asked what first grade meant--what is important in a first-grader's life. She said what I wanted to hear. The most important outcome of first grade is to have a good feeling about oneself. I did not want to hear which reading program she preferred.

The interaction is significant. This response, while valued in East Williston, is not universally valued in many school districts which place emphasis on the direct instruction of basic reading skills. In a search for a reading specialist, one interviewing teacher reported:

> We looked for someone who did not have a mechanistic, programmatic, testing approach to reading instruction. Instead, we looked for someone who knew the learning process and could integrate reading instruction into the regular curriculum.

East Williston has a set of values that inform its search for teachers.

"Part of the mystique of the Wheatley School [East Williston's high school] is the autonomous teacher." "We look for the best." "If you get outstanding teachers, you get outstanding education for students." But "the best" does not mean the strongest academically. East Williston has turned away candidates with very strong academic backgrounds (Ph.D. level) in favor of people who have strong teaching experience. "We can help people to acquire content but we cannot help them to acquire concern." Behind those views is the belief in teaching as an autonomous profession wherein having found the best practitioners, the system allows professional teachers autonomy to practice. Again, not all school districts share this belief and even East Williston as we will see has some ambivalence about it. But the capacity for autonomous performance has additional meaning in East Williston. Interview teams look for candidates who have something to offer "over and above" excellent classroom teaching. "We look for people who have had unusual experiences, for example, in the Peace Corps or on a cruise ship." "We look for people who can offer co-curricular activities." "We look for people who will make a difference, who will add to what we already have." "We try to get people who are not too alike." East Williston appears to be looking for people who will operate autonomously and who can make an independent contribution.

Yet the search for independent performers is tempered. "We look for people who work harmoniously with other people in a situation where there is pressure to produce" is the official view. But too many strong personalities threaten the integrity of small groups. Teacher involvement in the selection process in the view of at least one respondent can lead to the selection of less than the best. "The school cannot tolerate too many powerhouses." Teachers may rationalize some candidates away because of a fear of being outshone; instead, they look for people who are "compatible." Conservatism in this respect--a desire to find "people who are like us"--may reinforce selection from Long Island. "Here we will find people who are sophisticated." Decisions about candidates emerge as members of the teams try to reconcile competing values. Beneath these values, though, appears to be an overriding concern that the candidate selected be a master teacher.

From the candidate's viewpoint, the interview was a major recruitment device. In determining who will teach in a district, self-selection plays a major role. The new teachers interviewed had applied to other districts and had progressed in their selection processes. But most were strongly drawn to East Williston as they experienced its selection process.

Critical to the candidate's acceptance of the offer of a job were the feelings that the East Williston selection process engendered. As candidates, they felt that they were evaluated thoroughly, that they gained insight into the district, and, most important, that they had been taken seriously. The candidates, most of whom were experienced teachers, had never experienced or even witnessed such a process. Having survived the process, these candidates were ripe for the offer of the position.

Candidates were most impressed by what they perceived as the professionalism of the process and of their acceptance as professionals. After the paperwork phase, as one said:

> I was called for an interview with the committee. With twelve interviewers it looked like the Supreme Court. They asked me penetrating questions. It was very emotional. I felt somewhat uneasy afterwards but it was the most professional interview I have ever been through. I subsequently had a one-and-a-half hour interview with the superintendent. They then sent a team to my district to watch me teach, to interview other members of my department chairmen. The team consisted of the superintendent, a principal, a teacher, and a student. They were there for four hours. I then visited the district for a day. I was impressed by the professionalism of the process.

Candidates variously described the interview, particularly the group interview, as "grueling," "intensive," "comfortable." The experience of being interviewed by a number of people simultaneously was novel if intimidating. Yet all felt that they opened up and revealed themselves in the face of the many questions they were asked. As one said, "at the conclusion, they knew what I knew."

At the same time, candidates could glimpse what teachers and teaching in East Williston were like. One said, "I learned that each teacher taught her own way and this was reassuring. It said that I could be myself."

5. East Williston is aware that the interview process is limited in its capacity to assess teacher performance. Despite this limitation, the list of candidates is reduced to three or four. At this point,

references are telephoned. Whereas written references may have sufficed in earlier stages of the process, only personal contact will suffice now. "You cannot trust written references in education." "People in education will write favorable references because they want to give people a second chance." East Williston believes that a more reliable assessment will be obtained by asking questions of superordinates and peers. Calls are typically made by the principals who feel most assured of reliable assessments when they can use their informal networks to obtain information. Using the information gained in these telephone interviews and surely cognizant of team views, the principal, generally acting alone at this point, effectively narrows the field to a single candidate.

6. The process calls for an observation of teaching, preferably in the candidate's current school. However, about half the time, students have left school for the summer and a visit is not possible. Hence, great reliance is placed upon the team's interview of the candidate and the principal's check of the candidate's references. Principals are expected to delve deeply into all aspects of the candidate's teaching ability. (For the nature of the questions covered in the principal's reference checks, see Appendix B of this case study).

The penultimate stage in the selection process is the visit to the finalist's school to observe him or her teaching. The visit is made by the team that assesses the finalist's ability to teach. At this stage, of course, East Williston has become virtually committed to hiring the finalist for it would create extreme embarrassment for the candidate if he or she failed to be hired. Less threatening for the candidate, but considered less valid by East Williston, is a demonstration lesson by the candidate in the East Williston schools. This alternative is pursued only when a visit to the candidate's school is not possible (for example, because that school has closed earlier for the summer than East Williston). Paradoxically, although the East Williston process focuses on assessing teaching performance, by the time performance is actually assessed, the step is nearly a formality. Still it has great symbolic value as the focal point of the selection process. And it does provide a final check, that is, someone who looked disastrous in the classroom would not be hired.

Although East Williston does not formally hire only experienced teachers, its emphasis on proven teaching competence obviously pushes decisionmakers in that direction. The exceptions to the implicit policy of hiring only experienced teachers prove the role. Sometimes part-time or temporary teachers are converted to tenure-track positions without the informal process. In these instances, the district is well-acquainted with the teacher's performance. Two teachers new to the system were interviewed for this study. In one case, the teacher had worked as an aide and a temporary teacher and was hired after a full search. In the second case, the teacher was described by her college of education supervisor (who had close connections to East Williston) as the best student teacher in her experience.

7. The final stage in the process is the principal's recommendation to the superintendent and the interview of the finalist by the superintendent. The process must be explicated and the recommendation defended (see Appendix B of this case study). Upon acceptance of the recommendation by the superintendent, the candidate is interviewed by the superintendent. Candidates believe that the superintendent's interview is a continuation of the selection process and are quite taken with the idea that the district's chief executive has taken the time to participate in their selection.

Although the full selection process was often truncated because of time limitations, candidates still felt that they were handled in a way different from what they had come to perceive as the norm in most districts. East Williston actually assessed their credentials, their personalities, and their teaching performance in a process that involved the candidate himself or herself, at least those who survived to later stages. Other districts had vaguer processes that consisted of credential examination and interviews by a single interviewer. The candidates felt less scrutinized and less involved.

From the candidates' perspective, the major effect of the selection process is to make them feel more important than they have ever been made to feel before in their careers. "I was flying when they selected me," said one. "I felt a tremendous ego boost," said another. "The process made me feel like I was wanted here," said a third. The selection process generates enthusiasm in the candidate, an enthusiasm that carries over into teaching in East Williston. Although candidates were drawn to East Williston by the process, they were also drawn by East Williston's other attractions such as salary and working conditions. Yet, the alternative for these candidates was employment in districts that offer comparable salaries and that appear to offer comparable working conditions.

OTHER PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Of course, the hiring decision is only the first step in attracting and retaining a career staff member in a school district. Other personnel policies and practices come into play.

Teacher Evaluation and Tenure

East Williston has a formal teacher evaluation process. Pretenure teachers are evaluated at least three times per year. (Tenured teachers are evaluated once every three years.) Principals and curriculum associates evaluate teachers using a form that calls upon them to rate a teacher as "satisfying expectations" or "not satisfying expectations" in seven areas. These are "planning instruction," "implementing instruction," "assessing student performance," "communicating and interacting with pupils, staff, and parents," "contributing to students' personal development," "performing non-classroom responsibilities," and "developing personal and professional skills." The rater provides feedback to the teacher about his or her assessment of the extent to which the teacher meets the rater's expectations. The process is seen as an occasion for getting positive reinforcement. It is an occasion for "learning that my beliefs about what is important are valued."

The teacher evaluation process does lead to the tenure decision in the third year. In the fall of each year, the superintendent publishes a notice concerning tenure and the names of candidates for tenure in a bulletin sent to the community:

> Early each spring the superintendent recommends to the Board of Education the granting or not granting of tenure to teaching staff who have met State requirements relative to service time. His recommendations are based on evaluations

> made by appropriate administrative and supervisory staff, and such other data as he deems appropriate within the letter and spirit of statutes governing tenure in New York State. With occasional exceptions, the superintendent makes his decisions regarding tenure recommendations by the end of January. He expects most concerns regarding a tenure candidate to be brought to his attention well in advance of January so that the concerns may be considered and addressed by the tenure candidate and administration. Exceptions to this timetable usually involve events or activities of a specific nature that occur well along in the tenure year and that could not reasonably have been anticipated.

The notice is intended to alert those with concerns to come forward. During the candidate's third year, the superintendent himself enters the teacher evaluation process. As noted earlier, East Williston continues to make decisions about who shall be retained. Out of 40 candidates for tenure between 1980 and 1984, five persons were denied tenure and let go.

Staff Development for New Teachers

More important to the new teachers' adjustment was help from curriculum associates, other teachers, principals, and the staff development program. New teachers generally felt that they had adequate help in adjusting to teaching in East Williston. The help was seen as informal and "there if you want to take advantage of it." They did not perceive it as help that they had to take.

Officially, curriculum associates have the major responsibility for helping new teachers adjust to the district. Curriculum associates are department chairpersons in the high school who also supervise curriculum and instruction in the primary and middle schools. An important part of their job as they see it is to communicate district expectations to new teachers. Because the curriculum is flexible (not much is written down), the curriculum associates tailor their specific responses to the specific needs of individual teachers. For some, they provide demonstration lessons and close supervision, but for most, the help is in the form of assistance with particular projects or with approaches relatively unique to the district. The curriculum associates believe that they have enough time to provide the help that they should and new teachers agree.

The new teachers' colleagues are the second major source of help. These colleagues were involved in the selection of the new teacher, and the major ancillary consequence of the selection process is that the team involved in selection becomes invested in the new teachers' success. The process creates and reinforces feelings of loyalty on both sides and fosters teamwork. Those who were involved in selection cannot allow the new teacher to fail. And the new teacher cannot fail his or her new teammates. Whatever help is needed or sought is given. Teacher isolation, common in many school systems, is diminished in East Williston by the selection process and the norm of collegiality it facilitates.

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

The reality of teaching in East Williston turned out to be pretty much what the new teachers were led to expect. One was pleased to discover that she could in fact exercise her own judgment. Another was pleasantly surprised to discover that he would have to be involved in the redefinition of an educational program. A few thought that the interviewers had overstated the difficulty of working with demanding East Williston parents. One said that she took the first year to learn the East Williston structure and that she planned to take the second year to make that structure her own.

For the most part, teaching in East Williston conforms to a professional conception of the role. Talented teachers are hired and are given the opportunity to teach as they judge best. Said one experienced teacher:

> I have been free to experiment and innovate. I have never had the feeling that I had to worry about test scores. I am treated as a professional whose judgment counts.

East Williston teachers find themselves in an environment in which community and parental support of education is high and in which they have substantial flexibility to make instructional decisions.

Professional autonomy is especially strong at the high school. Teachers are expected to determine what and how to teach within rather broad guidelines. The high school has a tradition of teaching that has its roots in the early history of the school district some 25 years ago. It was called the Wheatley School to create the image that it might be a private school. Teachers were autonomous. Department chairpersons were called curriculum associates to connote the role as "firsts among equals" and not "superiors." Teachers have felt that they can assert their own values. The tradition of professional teaching at the Wheatley School resembles the tradition found in established, academically oriented private schools.

Teachers in East Williston are treated as professionals in another important sense. They are involved in teacher and administrator selection. The system's approach to hiring administrators matches the system's approach to hiring teachers. Mixed teams of teachers, administrators, parents, and students help to select administrators. Thus, teachers are involved not only in picking their peers but also their superordinates. The selection of administrators is a more elaborate and time-consuming process than the selection of teachers. Lengthy job descriptions are prepared, brochures widely circulated, and search and screening thoroughly conducted.

Teacher participation in staff selection generates an engagement with schoolwide and districtwide issues. Teachers are given the opportunity to discuss with adults their own values and the values of the district. They are taken from their district to other districts to observe the way others operate. These are rare opportunities in themselves.

More important, the individual teacher is obligated to articulate his or her own philosophy of education and confront those of colleagues and the district to arrive at a consensus. The teacher's views are taken seriously; teachers feel involved. They get to find out whether others share their views about what is important. They are empowered to help shape the school and the district--the environment in which they work. In the process, their own views are, of course, shaped. They are compelled to assess and reassess their individual and collective teaching strengths and weaknesses.

The process is consensual. Teachers in East Williston believe that the process results in the selection of staff who are different from the staff who would be hired if more usual administrative hiring practices prevailed. They believe, in particular, that it results in the hiring of administrators who are comfortable with the "team approach." By this, they mean administrators who will respect the independence of the classroom teacher but who will continue to involve teachers in decisionmaking. Teachers in East Williston have had firmly established the idea that they have responsibilities beyond the classroom. However, there is a force in East Williston that is beginning to make inroads into teacher professionalism.

BUREAUCRATIC COORDINATION

In East Williston, curriculum coordination is the direct responsibility of the curriculum associates who, as has been pointed out, are department chairpersons in the high school and coordinators of their respective subjects in the elementary and middle schools. Historically, their responsibilities were only in the high school where, as noted, each functioned as first among equals. Curriculum associates are conceived as master teachers and usually teach one class a day. They remain members of the teachers' bargaining unit. They receive a salary supplement of $3,500-$4,000.

Under the current superintendent's leadership, the responsibilities of the curriculum associates were extended to the elementary and middle schools. This extension was made because of the perception of a lack of a common curriculum within grades and the lack of articulation between grades. The curriculum associates were given a mandate to correct this problem.

Reinforcing what teachers perceive as some consolidation of power at the center is the fact that just about all the curriculum associates were hired from outside East Williston by the superintendent. Although teachers were involved in the hiring of the curriculum associates, they perceive them increasingly as agents of the administration. Curriculum associates, though they remain members of the teachers' bargaining unit, are increasingly seen as management. For their part, the curriculum associates perceive that it is their mandate to tighten the curriculum--to ensure greater commonality among classes and greater articulation across grade levels.

The impact of the curriculum associates has been most sharply felt in the middle school. Over the last several years, the middle school has gone from self-contained classrooms to a departmentalized structure. Teachers have gone from a high level of autonomy and no prescribed curriculum to a departmental structure with a feeling of responsibility to a curriculum associate. The perceived need for curriculum coordination has created a structure within which these teachers must function and some resent it. This is so despite the fact that teachers have been involved in the creation of that new structure. Once the structure exists, it controls what the individual teacher can do. "Some resist the new mathematics curriculum because [it] infringes on what you can choose to teach."

Every school district wrestles with the tension between bureaucratic imperatives (like the need to articulate curriculum) and teacher professionalism (which allows teachers the flexibility to meet student needs and interests). On the one hand, board members, citizens, and parents expect that school administrators can describe the curriculum. Administrators cannot do this if each teacher goes his or her own way. Even teachers expect articulation. "Lower grade teachers should prepare students for my classes; I suppose that I should prepare students for subsequent grades." Yet curriculum coordination infringes on the teacher's ability to determine what, and sometimes how, to teach. Often attempts are made to alleviate the tension by suggesting that only content be prescribed and that teachers be free to choose method. Yet most real choices inhere to content; moreover, mandating content often mandates method!

As East Williston continues to wrestle with the perceived need for curriculum coordination, it will challenge the flexibility of the classroom teacher. In turn, the professional autonomy that has contributed to the ethos of East Williston stands in some jeopardy. Teacher involvement in curriculum coordination decisions may help to mitigate some feelings of deprofessionalization. However, for teachers to maintain the high level of enthusiasm and commitment that they proclaim, they must have autonomy to meet student needs with a rich curriculum.

ASSESSING EAST WILLISTON'S SELECTION PROCESS

Administrators and teachers in East Williston believe that their selection process operates to recruit and hire the kinds of teachers that they would like to see in the district. Founded about 25 years ago, the district began with a commitment to academic excellence and was staffed accordingly. This meant hiring academically credentialed teachers to prepare students for selective colleges. East Williston faculty of long standing believe that they have not had to relax their hiring standards even in areas of relative shortage. They believe that they hire faculty of the same quality as in the fondly remembered early days of East Williston. They have in recent years perceived a decrease in the quality of the pool from which they could select. However, their personnel needs are so modest in relation to the pool that they have had little difficulty in finding the quality of teachers they desire.

The school district has long emphasized substantial experience as a condition of hiring--teachers who have established a record that can be examined. In recent years, at the direction of the current superintendent, there has been some movement toward hiring a few teachers new to teaching. Where this has been done, the district insists upon substantial evidence of strong beginning teaching experience. New teachers so hired may have had their student teaching in East Williston, worked as aides in East Williston, or have had other experiences that can be assessed by persons in East Williston.

There are some obvious limits on obtaining accurate appraisals of past performance. First, there must be a track record. This limitation works against hiring teachers new to teaching. Their only record will be student teaching, which often cannot be accurately appraised. The student teacher may or may not have had an opportunity to perform independently. And the grading of student teaching is notoriously unreliable because of the reluctance of college of education faculty to stop a new teacher's career before he or she has had an opportunity to gain some experience. Principals' ratings of teachers are often not reliable. Principals may have incentives to distort evaluations depending on whether they are anxious to keep or lose a teacher.

Because obtaining accurate appraisals of past performance is difficult, East Williston prefers to assess current performance. Most valid is an assessment of the candidate in his or her current assignment, for this may reveal not only the immediately observable but also whether the teacher has been able to develop long-term rapport and long-term teaching strategies. Where this is not possible, East Williston settles for a demonstration lesson in an East Williston classroom. Because past and current performance is the best predictor of future performance, East Williston's strong emphasis is correctly placed. And East Williston continues to assess teacher performance, especially in a teacher's early years in the district.

The benefits of East Williston's approach for the candidate and for the teachers who participate are substantial. The candidate learns more about the district than candidates typically do. But the most impressive benefits may be to the teachers who participate.

Although administrators in East Williston remain firmly in charge of the selection process, the level of teacher participation approaches that employed in many university search procedures. Teacher participation in East Williston makes its selection process collegial and professional. Administrators make the decisions and occasionally act peremptorily, but the norm of practice is to allow, accommodate, and respect teacher input.

This breaching of the typical management/labor division of responsibilities is welcomed by the teachers individually and collectively. The local teachers' union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, supports teacher participation in selection decisions; in fact, it hardly has seemed an issue. Yet in most school districts, the teachers' association insists that hiring is a management decision so that they cannot be held accountable for the hiring of incompetent teachers. The union seems less concerned about the dismissal of less competent teachers and more concerned about the overall quality of the teaching force.

As already noted, teachers welcome the additional responsibility entailed in their selection role. They welcome the measure of control it gives them to choose their colleagues and superiors. They welcome the opportunity to rethink their own beliefs. They welcome the opportunity to shape their school and their school district. They welcome the sense of ownership and belonging that is engendered.

The financial costs of teacher participation are modest. Meetings and interviews are generally after school hours and these constitute the major activity. The observation of candidate's teaching is actually a small part of the process. On these occasions, the district must hire substitutes. Thus, there is the cost of the substitutes. Additional modest financial costs are associated with advertising in the *New York Times* and elsewhere.

There is one way by which the selection process might be improved. East Williston often is not sure that a vacancy will exist in the fall until late in the preceding school year or even into the summer. Hence, the selection process must be truncated. The full selection process could operate in more instances if East Williston could better anticipate vacancies. Although some tightening of rules about leaves-of-absence might help, some unpredictability is inevitable. The small size of East Williston precludes its using projections that work out on the average.

East Williston's concern for assessing the teaching performance of candidates seems quite reasonable. Yet, the norm of practice in teacher selection is quite different. For reasons of efficiency (actually cost minimization) and apparent evenhandedness (equally superficial treatment of all), school districts often settle on selection processes that are at some distance from assessing performance. They look at college transcripts that reveal only how good a college student a candidate has been. They look at student teaching grades, which are typically inflated. They look at National Teacher Examinations scores--scores that do not correlate with performance. They look at letters of recommendation garnered by the candidate to reflect the most favorable assessment of his or her performance. They conduct formal or informal interviews, which are imperfect indicators of performance. These procedures, used by the vast majority of school districts, do not indicate whether a teacher can teach. They are used because they do not cost the district much and they appear to treat all applicants evenhandedly.

However, East Williston believes that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. (Research supports this belief.) East Williston's process is designed to get a measure of past performance, which can be obtained at reasonable cost.

East Williston achieves its selection objectives--it manages to find and hire the quality of staff it desires. To some extent, this success is due to East Williston's "natural advantages," which attract a sizable talent pool, and to some extent to its special selection process. East Williston also achieves an ancillary objective in its selection process. It involves existing staff on a regular basis in a reappraisal of school and district staffing needs. The question is how applicable is the process in larger or poorer school districts? What would the effect be?

The process could be replicated in larger districts. As noted, the direct financial cost is low. To be sure, the process is time-consuming. Principals and teachers must spend time in all phases of search, screening, and selection. Time spent would increase as the number of teachers to be hired increased. But teachers may be more willing than generally believed to invest this time because they live with the consequences of both bad and good personnel decisions.

The major difficulty would be in bureaucratic complexity. The superintendent could not be personally involved. A large number of searches in one school might overwhelm the principal's capacity to manage them. It would be inefficient to advertise separately for each third-grade vacancy. Some adjustments would have to be made. But the centerpiece of the process is teacher involvement. A belief in the importance of teacher involvement is prerequisite to the successful implementation of the process. Management and the union must concur that teacher involvement is important. There is no reason to think that the benefits for teachers of participating in the selection process would be different. And there is no reason to think that candidate's experience would be substantially different. East Williston is perceived by candidates and teachers as a desirable place to teach, partly because of the attitude toward teachers revealed by the district's involving teachers in selection. That benefit should carry over.

The major difference is whether a large district can generate a pool of high quality experienced candidates as East Williston tries to do. The supply of candidates depends on many factors. If the large district's demand is greater than the supply of experienced teachers, then the district may want to consider inexperienced candidates. The district would then have to find ways to appraise teaching performance, such as by demonstration teaching or internships. Alternatively, the district could abandon the appraisal of teaching performance in which case it would be left with only teacher involvement in selection. The district might gain some benefit from this alone.

District size aside, East Williston attracts teachers, in part because of high salaries, relatively high expenditures, parents who care, and students who are motivated. Districts of less wealth cannot afford high salaries and general high expenditures, though a belief in the importance of teachers might permit some reallocation from some expenditure categories to salaries. The attractiveness of teaching in an educationally supportive environment cannot be overestimated. Nonetheless, it seems worthwhile for a district to enhance its attractiveness to teachers. Teachers in East Williston, many of whom have come from other wealthy school districts, value East Williston's treatment of them as professionals. This attitude is communicated to candidates by the search process. A reputation for teacher professionalism appears to make East Williston especially attractive to candidates. This alone might give even poor school districts a competitive edge in recruitment and retention.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix A

EAST WILLISTON, L.I., N.Y. SCHOOLS

Schools: North Side (K-4) Willets Road (5-7) The Wheatley School (8-12S)

Due to a significant number of retirements several full-time supervisory and teaching positions are open in one of Long Island's outstanding school districts. We are interested in persons who possess in-depth strengths in one major field of study, strong preparation and interest in at least one related area, and a positive attitude toward varied assignments from year to year. Ability and willingness to coach and/or sponsor co-curricular activities are desirable.

Positions Open For 1981-82

Science Curriculum Associate (K-12)

- Leadership in staff and program development, and supervision
- Ability to define and have implemented an excellent K-12 science program
- A master teacher/a teacher of teachers
- Powerful commitment to creating an environment wherein students and staff are encouraged to use the talents they possess and which fosters the natural curiosity/and interests of students

Physical Education Curriculum Associate/ Director of Athletics (K-12)

- Leadership in staff and program development, and supervision
- Ability to define and have implemented an excellent K-12 Physical Education program
- Ability to develop a comprehensive program of inter-sch0lastic and intra-mural activities appropriate for the district
- Commitment to the belief that students having positive experiences through active participation is the primary objective of physical education and athletic activities

One English Teacher-Wheatley

- English and World Literature
- Dramatics

One Science Teacher-Wheatley

- Very strone preparation in Physics a must
- Enjoys working with Jr. H.S. students

One Music Teacher-District

- General Music
- Sufficient qualifications to be considered for position of Dept. Admin. Co-ordinator

One Part-time Physical Education Teacher-District

- Male, in order to balance staff need
- Prepared to work with students of many ages

One Special Education Teacher-Willets Road

- Self-contained classroom
- Position requires skills in diagnostic-prescriptive evaluations, classroom management, staff consultation and teacher in-service training
- Must have proven ability to relate to and handle students with special learning and personal needs. This is a new postion

One Part-Time Itinerant Speech/Language Pathologist-Wheatley

- Experience essential
- Will provide consultation, diagnosis and therapy

One Social Studies Teacher-Wheatley

- Comprehensive background
- Enjoys working with Jr. H.S. students

Two Mathematics Teachers-Wheatley

- Ability to program in at least one computer language
- Breadth of knowledge and ability to teach elementary math to AP calculus

One Part-Time Art Position (Tentative)-Wheatley

- All basil art areas
- Mentor addressing individual interests of many students

Reading Teachers: One Full Time-Wheat One Part-Time Willets Rd.

- Special education experience and/or training highly desirable
- Extensive preparation in at least one discipline in addition to reading

One Part-Time (50% load) School Psychologist-Wheatley

- Excellent opportunity for energetic and innovative person to provide services in psychological testing, research, teacher in-service, program evaluations and extensive counseling
- Dual certification in school psychology and counseling or social work desirable

One English As A Second Language Teacher-Wheatley

- Certification in Spanish a must
- Ability to speak Portuguese
- Must view role as that of developing student proficiency in English, serving as a supportive mentor to ESL students
- Serve as a vital link between ESL students and other teachers and administrators; and between home and school

The East Williston District provides an excellent environment for teaching. Its constituents have high expectations of students and staff. Salary and fringe benefits are excellent.

Selected Teacher Salary Ranges

B.A., Step 1 $14,890	B.A., Step 15 $25,066
N.A., Step 1 $17,272	M.A., Step 15 $29,151
M.A. + 60, Step 1 $19,699	M.A. + 60, Step 15 $31,668

Instructions to Candidates: (Please identify position being applied for on front lower left of envelope)

Send letter of application and resume to:

Dr. Darrell R. Lund, Superintendent of Schools
East Williston U.F.S.D., 110 E. Williston Ave., East Williston, N.Y. 11596
(Must be eligible for NYS Certification)
DO NOT call the school district. Letters and resumes will be screened.
Persons in whom we are interested will be sent an application form.

Appendix B

Memorandum

TO: Superintendent of Schools

FROM: Principal

DATE: July 19, 1982

RE: Recommendation to appoint Ms. "Smith" as Grade Two teacher

Attached please find the papers pertaining to Ms. Smith, my recommendation for the Grade Two opening at our school.

Some background leading to this recommendation would be appropriate. When it became apparent that we had an opening due to a resignation and retirement, I regarded this as an opportunity to strengthen our staff. Several factors were taken into consideration.

- Though the immediate need was for Grade Two, a year hence the need could very well be at another grade level.
- With the possibility of all day kindergarten, someone with early childhood experience would be of value.
- A person whose strengths would complement, rather than duplicate the strengths of the present staff would be preferable.

Letters of application were received in the following ways:

In-district announcement
New York Times advertisement
Word of mouth
Unsolicited

Approximately 200 letters of application were received. All were reviewed by me, and the majority were also reviewed by the language arts coordinator. Interviews were scheduled with twenty-eight applicants. (Five of these were in-district; two persons were being excessed from another school, and three were frequent substitutes.)

Interviewing took place the weeks of July 5-9 and July 12-16. I was present at all interviews; though not present at all interviews, interviewing with me were Ms. A and Ms. B, grade-level teachers, Ms. C, kindergarten teacher, and the language arts coordinator. After all interviews had been completed, six candidates were invited to return for a second time. These six met with us on the same day, so we were able to compare/contrast more easily. We agreed that a combination of the following would best serve the needs of the school community; our preference would be the candidate who possessed most of them to a marked degree:

- Youth
- Male
- Relevant recent experience
- Non-aggressive, non-threatening personality
- Different background from community and staff
- Something "extra"
- Professionalism
- High energy level
- Desire to grow
- Openness
- Teachable

We tried to view each candidate and how they would relate with the students, the staff, and the parents. Each candidate was thoroughly briefed on our district and the qualities that make it unique. Relationships--pupil, peer, parent--were explored in detail. Ability to function under stress and pressure was discussed at length.

After re-interviewing the six candidates, it was our feeling that any of the six would have been satisfactory; however, we rather quickly ruled out three of them, and very soon thereafter, Ms. Smith emerged as the first choice of the four of us who did the final interviewing.

Ms. Smith has eleven years experience with a Long Island public school district, and is being excessed due to declining enrollment. Her most recent experience was at a school that serves the more affluent portion of the community that lives on the water. Certain parallels can be drawn between this community and our own. Seven of these years were at the kindergarten level; the remaining four at Grade One. Her kindergarten experience was somewhat more structured than here. We see that as an advantage; as we plan ahead for all day sessions, more structure will be necessary and appropriate; she could very easily shift to the kindergarten level. She has done considerable work with A-V, and used teacher-made tapes to good advantage in her teaching. She shows a good understanding of the needs of young children, recognizing that positive attitude towards self and learning are paramount. She recognizes that a variety of methods/experiences are necessary to reach each child, and to enable him to develop at his own pace in his own style is the best way to learn.

Her small stature and quiet manner belie the inner strength we all sensed. I have no doubt that she will be able to handle parents effectively. She brings a high level of mission to her teaching, and should prove to be a valuable addition to the staff.

In telephone conversations on July 9 with her current and former principals, the following was ascertained:

General Question	Principal School A	Principal School B
Organization and planning	Excellent, thorough. Great deal of time spent. Stays late after school almost every day.	Better than most in organization.
Feeling for children	Very good with kids.	Knows priorities for children. Has ability to diagnose and prescribe. Really gets along with kids.
Relationships Parent Staff	Very fine parent relationships. Works well with difficult, fussy, demanding parents. Is firm and friendly, can hold her own. Outstanding staff relationships.	Above average on every level of relationships. Good ability to talk to parents. Got along well with peers.
Energy level	High energy level. Capacity for work high; always has a project going.	Above average energy level.
Stress level	Works very well under stress.	Handles stress very well.
Creativity	Very creative.	Appropriately creative.
Curriculum knowledge	With her good kindergarten background, knows young children and their needs from a curriculum viewpoint.	Broad curriculum background in kindergarten - two.
Openness to criticism	Very open - no problem in accepting criticism.	Accepts constructive criticism very well.
Ready to grow	Growth occurred when she came to my building within the district. I think she is ripe and excited at the prospect of a new challenge, and should really grow.	
Anything else?	We hate to lose her. She's a thoroughly nice person to have around.	She's vibrant and bubbly, has a good personality and sense of humor. Had the respect of all. She upholds policies and procedures.

Case Study 4

TEACHER SELECTION IN THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Arthur E. Wise
Linda Darling-Hammond
Amy Praskac

INTRODUCTION

Recruitment and selection of new teachers in Hillsborough County receive the attention of Central Office administrators, principals, and other teachers. The teacher selection process combines the advantages of centralized recruiting and screening with decentralized hiring decisions, according a great deal of authority to school principals in selecting their faculties. Over the past five years, the Central Office has begun to play a greater role in teacher selection although principals still make final hiring decisions. Central Office personnel conduct initial screening interviews using a structured interview and they verify applicants' credentials before certifying them as eligible. Both Central Office personnel and principals actively recruit candidates. This case study examines how Hillsborough staff manage this simultaneously centralized and decentralized process in a complex policy environment at a time when the pool of teacher candidates is shrinking.

At the same time that selection changes have been implemented in the district, the State of Florida has instituted numerous reforms in education. A number of these reforms have affected teacher education and certification. Requirements for entrance into teacher education programs have become more stringent. Teachers also must pass the Florida Teachers Competency Exam before they are eligible to teach. New teachers must participate in the Florida Beginning Teacher Program, a year-long internship, before attaining certification. This program has since been expanded into a career ladder program. Florida is also attempting to increase teacher salaries and make them commensurate with teacher salaries in other states. Toward this goal, the legislature has enacted a merit pay plan.

The recent history in Hillsborough, then, is one of change; change initiated by district personnel and change mandated by state legislation. Some changes have been more readily assimilated than others. Some have had positive effects. Others have had generally positive effects with unintended consequences. This case study examines Hillsborough's teacher selection process at just one point in its evolution--April 1984.

LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

The Hillsborough County School District primarily comprises urban Tampa but includes suburban and isolated rural areas as well. The population of approximately 700,000 covers 1,000 square miles. The University of South Florida and the University of Tampa are located here. The University of South Florida serves as an important source of recruits for Hillsborough.

The district is the fifteenth largest in the United States and the third largest in Florida, after Dade County (Miami) and Broward County (Ft. Lauderdale). The regular K-12 student body had a total membership of 111,838 for the fall of 1983. This population is mostly stable but is starting to increase at the elementary level. In 1983-84, there were 6,199 classroom teachers in the district. Seventy-seven percent of all teachers in the district were female. Teachers had an average of 14 years experience. All but 15 percent of the teaching force was tenured.

The racial distribution in the Hillsborough District during the 1981-82 school year was 74 percent white non-Hispanic, 20 percent black non-Hispanic, 5 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent Asian/Pacific Islanders or American Indian/Alaskan Natives. The district received a court order in 1969 to desegregate the schools.[1] The transfer of teachers to meet the court-mandated 80:20 ratio began in January 1970. During the 1983-84 school year, the racial distribution of teachers in the district was 77 percent white, 16 percent black, 6 percent Hispanic, and less than 1 percent other.

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[1] *Manning v. Hillsborough County*, U.S. District, Middle District Florida, June 3, 1969.

The test scores of Hillsborough students compare favorably with national averages.[2] The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills is given in the spring to all students in kindergarten through ninth grades. Test scores in reading, language, and mathematics are very close to the national averages. Some grades exceeded the national averages and others fell slightly below. Since this test was adopted in 1974, social promotion has diminished. The State Student Assessment Test, Part I, is given in October to third, fifth, and eighth graders in communications (reading and writing) and in mathematics. Composite scores of students in grades 3, 5, and 8 show that about 84 percent of Hillsborough students passed math and 89 percent passed communications during 1983-84, nearly the same as state averages of 87 percent and 91 percent. Part II is given to tenth graders in April to test functional literacy. Students must pass this test to receive a high school diploma. Seventy-eight percent of Hillsborough students passed math, 96 percent passed communications, with a total of 78 percent passing both. State averages were 78 percent, 95 percent, and 78 percent, respectively.

The district is typically described as being pupil-rich and property-poor. Therefore, Hillsborough County receives more from the Florida Education Finance Program than it contributes. In recent years, the property base has increased and the state formula has become more equalized, thus increasing Hillsborough's revenues. Most of the revenue for the district comes from the state: 62.9 percent in 1983. The next biggest portion came from the district itself, 23.5 percent. The federal government supplied 10.2 percent of revenue and the remainder, 3.4 percent, made up the balance of the funds.[3] Hillsborough County also has opted to impose the maximum discretionary levy (1.1 mills) allowed by the state legislature in addition to the local required effort (4.4 mills).

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[2] All information on test scores comes from "1983-84 Facts about Hillsborough County Schools," a brochure.

[3] Ibid.

Even at the maximum fiscal effort, Hillsborough lags behind other Florida districts in spending for education. The average per pupil expenditure in Hillsborough County was $2,318 per full-time equivalent for 1983-84. The state average per pupil expenditure was $3,009 in 1982-83.[4] Teacher salaries are also low. In 1983-84, the starting salary for a beginning teacher with no experience was $13,606. The starting salary for a teacher with a master's degree and no experience was $14,737. Even a doctorate earned one only a little more: The starting salary was $15,867 and the maximum salary--after 17 years of experience--was $24,366. Approximately 60 percent of all teachers in the district had bachelors' degrees and almost 40 percent had masters' degrees. Only a handful of teachers had doctorates.

The low salaries are a recognized impediment to Hillsborough's recruiting efforts. Hillsborough used to recruit candidates from Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, but these states have recently raised starting salaries to $16,000 so "sunshine alone won't do the job" as Florida salaries fall behind those in other southern states. Hillsborough finds it difficult to recruit even from other counties unless the candidate is moving to the area for other reasons--e.g., to attend school or accompany a spouse making a job move. Nearby Pinellas County (Clearwater) is Hillsborough's biggest competitor. Pinellas has higher starting salaries and "steals" many recruits. Hillsborough is more competitive at the upper end of the salary scale where the local teacher's union has concentrated its collective bargaining efforts. There are obvious reasons for this emphasis. Nearly a third of the district's teachers are in the top quarter of the schedule. Less than 20 percent are in the bottom quarter of the schedule.

Central Office officials recognize that problems in recruiting and retaining teachers arise because of the low salaries. Complaints about salary levels are frequently made by Central Office personnel administrators: "I can't do anything until we raise salaries. "Give me a decent starting salary and I'll get you good teachers." "Beginning salaries in most fields are better than end salaries in teaching." The legislature's expectations of educators are nonetheless very high. "No money, just quality," as one administrator expressed it.

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[4] C. Emily Feistritzer, *The Condition of Teaching: A State by State Analysis*, Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1983.

Despite these constraints, Hillsborough must hire a substantial number of teachers each year, filling approximately 600 vacancies annually. During the period July 1, 1982, to June 30, 1983, 367 experienced and 240 inexperienced teachers were hired. In addition to these new appointments, 285 temporary teachers were reappointed. Temporary teachers may be reappointed indefinitely. The largest number of these appointments, 250, was in elementary education; 45 of these were kindergarten teachers. A total of 166 teachers of exceptional children were hired. More math teachers were hired, 51, than in any other subject area.

Hillsborough's turnover rate in 1982-83 was just over 7 percent, not including leaves of absence. Of the 445 teachers who left the system, nearly three-quarters (317) resigned; another 128 teachers retired. In many school districts, the primary cause of attrition is retirement; the reverse is true in Hillsborough. The number of teachers taking temporary leaves during the year was 331. A total of 690 teachers transferred among schools during this period.

The number of new hires in 1983 was roughly the same as the number of new hires in each of the previous two years. Of these new hires, about 25 percent were from out of state. About 800 applicants, from various fields, were on file in the spring of 1984. Unfortunately, this is not a large ratio of applicants to vacancies and Hillsborough is beginning to see shortages in all areas, some more than others. High school English, for example, is a prominent shortage area; so are math and science. One administrator feels that the legislature exacerbated the shortage of secondary school teachers by increasing graduation requirements, since more students will now be registering for these courses. In 1982, there were eight vacancies in social studies; in 1983 there were 74. Most of these 74 vacancies are new positions. This problem may be resolved by reducing classroom periods from 60 to 50 minutes and by adding another period to the school day, if the union agrees to this plan. Surpluses existed in a few areas such as physical education, driver education, and distributive education.

Approximately 80 percent of the teachers in the district belong to the Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association (CTA). The CTA began as an independent unaffiliated organization in 1921. Until the mid-1960s it was considered to be a "typical professional organization." The CTA had no full-time staff, did not handle grievances, and did no bargaining until the Florida teachers walk-out in 1965. The CTA was affiliated with the National Education Association (NEA) until the early 1970s when NEA instituted a policy requiring that all local members belong to the state and national organizations as well. The CTA remained affiliated with the Florida Education Association until 1980 when it withdrew its membership.

STATE POLICY CONTEXT

Florida has an especially active state legislature in the area of education. A great deal of legislation has been passed at a fast pace. Unfortunately, passage of legislation in bits and pieces has created some contradictions in the state's education policy. For example, although more stringent requirements to strengthen the state's schools of education have been passed, the legislature has also considered legislation to deal with the teacher shortage by bypassing the system of teacher training. The enactment of further requirements and programs before the effect of current programs is known has exacerbated shortages, and the specificity of Florida's legislation leaves little room for creative responses on the part of education officials and little flexibility to administer prescribed programs.

Although the legislature has enacted legislation dealing with all aspects of the education system, they have particularly concerned themselves with the adequacy of state teacher education and certification. The following legislation, among other statutes, has affected teaching requirements and has shaped the context within which local districts recruit, hire, and train new teachers.

- A 1978 statute required teacher competency testing for certification. Effective in 1981, teacher candidates must pass criterion-referenced tests in reading, writing, mathematics, and professional knowledge to receive an initial certificate. In 1983, approval of teacher education programs within the state became contingent upon 80 percent of a program's graduates passing the teacher competency test.

- Another 1978 statute required scores at or above the 40th percentile on nationally normed, standardized college entrance exams as a prerequisite for admission to teacher education programs.
- 1981 legislation required successful completion of a year-long internship, known as the Florida Beginning Teacher Program, before attaining certification. (The Beginning Teacher Program is described in detail in the next subsection.)
- Legislation passed in 1983 expanded the Beginning Teacher Program into a career ladder. The Meritorious Instructional Personnel Program has four steps: beginning teacher, regular certificate, associate master teacher, and master teacher. Concurrent legislation created the Florida Quality Instruction Incentives Council to oversee and assist development and implementation of a statewide merit pay plan for the 1984-85 school year.
- 1983 legislation to offset teacher shortages funded three incentive programs (loan, tuition reimbursement, and loan forgiveness) to attract teachers to critical shortage areas and authorized school district officials to employ adjunct instructors to teach in areas of critical shortage.

These various requirements affect the supply of teachers, on the one hand by making it more difficult for Florida's college students to enter teacher education and receive certification, and on the other han by making it easier for district officials to hire uncertified candidates in shortage areas. Other policies, like the state-mandated increase in course requirements for student graduation, exacerbate some shortages by increasing the demand for teachers in the affected subject areas. The combination of policies creates a challenging environment for local school officials striving to allocate resources among the many areas affected by mandates while recruiting teachers to the growing number of vacant teaching positions.

Although teacher shortages in Florida are largely the result of growing student enrollments on the heels of declining enrollments in schools of education, the competency testing program has had an effect on supply. During the July 1982 administration, 86 percent of those taking the test for the first time passed the entire exam. Cut-off scores were raised for three of the four tests in May 1983. The supply effects of the testing program have been particularly pronounced for minority candidates. Forty-two percent of the blacks who took the test during the July 1982 administration passed the entire test compared to more than 90 percent of the whites who took the test.[5] Because a lower percentage of blacks than whites pass the exam, programs in predominantly black institutions (e.g., Florida A&M University) have been disproportionately affected by the program approval requirement.

Although the FTCE affects the overall supply of certified teachers, it has little impact on selection practices. Scores are not reported to local schools and interviews with school district personnel indicate that test scores do not factor into the hiring decision. Salaries are of more immediate concern to district administrators.

The State of Florida has wanted to increase salaries enough to reach the top quarter among states on average salaries. The average teacher's salary in 1982-83 was $18,538, ranking Florida thirty-second in the nation.[6] However, last year Florida's salaries moved up only 5.9 percent whereas the national average moved up 5.6 percent, leaving the state's ranking virtually unchanged. The state-enacted merit pay plan proposed as a way to increase salaries for some teachers appears to have done nothing to appease those who decry low salary levels and is consistently condemned by all local district personnel who mention it. "It's ludicrous to be talking about merit pay when Florida salaries are so low" was the perspective of a union official. One administrator denounced the selection process for merit pay awards as "utter chaos.

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[5] Unpublished data from the Division of Teacher Education, Certification, and Staff Development, Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida.

[6] Feistritzer, op. cit., pp. 2, 47.

We would need more than 100 observations a day to cover all the Hillsborough applicants. It could be a good thing, but they'll kill it." Feelings on the subject run high and the governor has been accused of appointing a merit pay monitoring committee and then not paying attention to it. In 1985, the legislature tabled all further funding for the merit pay program until administrative problems could be worked out.

HISTORY OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

Selection in the Hillsborough district is decentralized and in the hands of the professional staff. Dr. Raymond O. Shelton, the District Superintendent, is a strong proponent of this philosophy. When he came to Hillsborough from Omaha 17 years ago, he insisted on a free hand in hiring as a condition of his employment. He told the school board, "If you ask me to hire or promote anyone, that will be the kiss of death." The school board does not get involved in hiring per se but does recommend policy for the selection and promotion of teachers. Shelton allows the same freedom to the principals in the district. He feels strongly that if a principal is to be held accountable she or he must have hiring authority. "If I send a principal a bad teacher, I can't hold him responsible for performance."

The current philosophy of decentralization has historical roots as well. Thirty years ago, the Central Office had an even more limited function. Back then, a two-person office merely kept records. At that time teacher supply was very limited and the quality of teachers was poor. Turnover was reportedly high and salaries were low. Shelton's predecessor instituted changes that resulted in greater centralization. Applications, including certification verification, insurance forms, and references, had to be processed through the personnel office to offer employment. Before this requirement was made, the Central Office did not know who was employed until after hiring occurred because principals did all the hiring.

Now, the Central Office has assumed a much more prominent role, claiming the attention of an Assistant Superintendent and occupying the energies of several offices. The Director of Instructional Personnel oversees a staff of 28. There are four subject area supervisors. Each of these supervisors has an area of specialization. For example, one supervisor deals primarily with elementary school placement, another with placement for substitutes, special education, student services, gifted education, vocational education, and adult and continuing education. The Director of Instructional Personnel had a budget of $25,000 for recruitment.

Today the responsibilities of the Central Office extend to verifying certification and checking references and credentials to determine the eligibility of applicants. The Central Office also coordinates applicants and vacancies. An important function of the Central Office is enforcement of the racial balance of school faculties. The Central Office enforces the ratio for hiring conducted in the spring. Principals of schools with unbalanced racial representation on their faculties must justify why they do not hire candidates on the list who would improve the balance during this period. A Central Office administrator admitted that a principal cannot be forced to comply, but we "make it difficult for them" to hire someone who would tip the balance away from the desired ratio. The school board does not lift the requirement to hire whites and blacks in an 80:20 ratio until July.

The Central Office has the resources, staff and financial, to recruit teachers by actively seeking candidates in other states and to fill shortage area vacancies. The Central Office is similarly suited to the prescreening function because it has both more staff and more money. It is easier for fewer Central Office staff to handle verification of certification than to have numerous principals dealing with the State Department of Education. References can be checked in a similar fashion. This eliminates redundancy when a candidate is referred to more than one school. Should the candidate not meet the criteria set by the district, the Central Office makes this determination. If the applicant is someone the principal knows or has been asked to consider by a friend or colleague, this can alleviate personal pressure to hire a less than desirable candidate.

Central Office personnel are also trained to administer the EMPATHY interview (described in greater detail below). Because staff must be trained to administer the interview it is more efficient to have fewer persons certified to administer the interviews.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Hillsborough takes recruitment seriously because it has substantial hiring needs and a relatively small pool of applicants. Teacher candidates in the Hillsborough district are recruited in 85 schools of education and 10 states. Recruits are primarily from the southeast but come from as far north as Boston's Massachusetts Educational Recruiting Consortium to which 33 schools of education belong. Hillsborough recruits heavily out of state because Florida colleges graduate only one-third of the teachers needed. By 1985, this figure is expected to drop to one-fifth. Not only is Florida's population increasing, but the number of teacher candidates graduating from Florida colleges is decreasing. These trends are causing a drop in the proportion of new teachers who have graduated from Florida colleges.

Recruiters sell the advantages of living in Tampa such as the climate and the beaches and the low cost of living as well as the benefits of working for the Hillsborough School District. The Personnel Department issues a packet for candidates that includes a description of the school system, information on state and district requirements for application, a salary schedule, and an application. Also included is a pamphlet that describes life in Hillsborough County.

Recruiters work especially hard to recruit teachers in shortage subject areas. Several strategies are employed to recruit preferred candidates--those with outstanding qualifications and those certified in shortage areas. One strategy is a precontract binder, which is a commitment by the school system to hire but not for a specific position. "I will give one any day in Math, Science, Special Education, or English," claimed a personnel administrator. These candidates might be lost to the district if they had to negotiate the school-level hiring process from out of state and wait many months to receive a specific job offer.

Offering precontract binders is a calculated risk. Internal transfers must be accommodated before new hires may be made and principals may reject binded candidates. The Personnel Office must balance this risk against the likelihood that vacancies will occur in shortage areas. Because the district has incurred an obligation to hire, good decisions must be made about applicants, accurate counts on vacancies are essential, and the Personnel Office must correctly anticipate the responses of principals.

For candidates they especially want to employ, the recruiters are willing to be flexible. They will, for example, conduct interviews on Saturdays, or will offer to help find housing in the Tampa area. In spite of these tactics, the district operates at a severe disadvantage in recruiting both out-of-state and nearby district personnel because starting salaries are not competitive.

More than one Central Office administrator mentioned the "tremendous problem recruiting blacks." Hillsborough has tried to go to black colleges but with little success. There were more recruiters than students at North Carolina A&T this year. Some administrators feel that black students now do not want to go into education. This perception is confirmed by recent national statistics on the declining percentage of black students who major in education. Another administrator perceived the Florida Teacher Competency Test to be an obstacle for minority students. However, he noted that minority recruits from outside Florida (e.g., from the Boston Consortium) have no problem passing the test.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

There are three main steps in the teacher selection process. First, the application, credentials, and references are reviewed by the Central Office. If an applicant fulfills the initial requirements, an interview at the Central Office is then scheduled. If an applicant completes this stage of the process satisfactorily, she or he will be referred to principals for interviews at the schools.

Applying for a teaching job is time-consuming and costly. Teacher candidates who wish to work in the Hillsborough district must file an application complete with a picture, transcript, and three references. A copy of a Florida teaching certificate or an official statement from the Department of Education stating the reason for the issuance of a temporary certificate must also be provided.

Obtaining a certificate requires the filing of another application with the Teacher Certification Section of the Department of Education. A college transcript and $20 is required with this application. An applicant must also be fingerprinted at the cost of another $20. Taking the Teacher Competency Test (TCT) costs $50. In all, an applicant has invested nearly $100 before she or he is even able to schedule an interview.

Applications, including credentials and college GPA, are reviewed by Central Office personnel as the first step in the screening process. Academic proficiency is considered important, but no specific minimum grade point average is required. References are very important and the Central Office contacts references directly by letter or by phone rather than relying upon the applicant to do so. The persons contacted usually include the university supervisor, the student-teaching supervisor, and the principal at the student-teaching site.

Most of the traits that the recipient of this form is asked to evaluate relate to personality and character. "Appearance" tops the list of the 14 items to be rated. "Knowledge of Subject Matter," "Organization and Implementation of Plans," and "Ability to Motivate Students" appear eighth, ninth, and tenth. However, district administrators note that the order in which the traits are listed does not necessarily indicate their importance. Another form is used as a guide to interview a reference over the telephone. References are asked a question about the success of the applicant's teaching experience and about professional competence, relationships with students and others, and professional commitment. This form ranks traits to be rated in a very different order from the form sent in the mail.

Recruiters who interview applicants on college campuses use yet another form (see Appendix C for the campus interview form). This form calls for more factual information such as graduation date, education major, internship, and Florida requirements for certification, Teacher Competency Test, and the Beginning Teacher Program. Some of these items are not on the other forms because the applicant has furnished the information on an application form. There is a short section where the interviewer can rate the applicant on appearance, communication skills, alertness and responsiveness, and confidence and poise, as well as on the overall impression.

During our interviews with supervisors, they reported several criteria they considered important when interviewing a new teacher: scholarship, appearance, suitability as a role model, communicative and human relations skills, subject area knowledge, dedication to the profession, and a motivation to improve. Mastery of subject content is not considered as important as teaching technique. Hillsborough used to hire liberal arts graduates but has not in the recent past. However, liberal arts graduates had a 45 percent turnover rate and were considered by some Central Office administrators to be likely to be miserable failures. In short, in Hillsborough technical training is very important and "the way is more important than the what."

To evaluate a candidate's personality, supervisors use a structured interview called EMPATHY (Emphasizing More Personalized Attitudes Toward Helping Youth). The EMPATHY interview was developed in the Omaha, Nebraska, public schools using federal funds under Project EMPATHY (1972- 1975). Hillsborough decided to adopt the EMPATHY interview after three staff persons went to Omaha to investigate its use there.[7] Examples of questions and further detail about the interview are not reported here because the instrument is under copyright and users are pledged to keep it secure.

Project EMPATHY began by collecting information from students, teachers, administrators, and parents on what makes a good teacher. According to Thayer's article, eight "life-style themes" emerged as the focal points around which to describe an outstanding teacher. These are:

1. *Relationship*--A teacher relates to students by listening, being patient, and caring; and builds relationships to help students grow and develop.

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[7] The description of the EMPATHY interview is taken from an article by Vickey W. Thayer: "Project EMPATHY--An Alternative Way to Hire Teachers," *North Central Association Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4, Spring 1978, pp. 438-442.

2. *Democratic Orientation*--A teacher with a democratic orientation works out problems with the students and sees supervision as supportive and understanding, not authoritarian, but is not necessarily permissive. The teacher handles discipline problems in the classroom as much as possible by working them out *with* the students.
3. *Rapport Drive*--This teacher likes students and wants to be liked by them. Teachers with high rapport drive make students feel comfortable when they are together.
4. *Empathy*--The teacher puts himself in the other person's place, apprehends the student's state of mind and "feels" with him or her. Empathy provides the teacher feedback about the student's feelings and thoughts.
5. *Student Orientation*--The teacher believes that students ought to be heard, understood, and dealt with as people first; curriculum, materials, and public image take second place.
6. *Acceptance*--The teacher accepts a person "as is" and helps from that point. It is neither a condemn nor condone approach, defined as unconditional regard. Accepting teachers often have an openness about their feelings that makes them approachable.
7. *Student Success*--The teacher receives satisfaction from the success of students and sees it as fulfillment of his or her own goals.
8. *Work and Profession Orientation*--This includes work organization, professional relationships, and belief in the teaching profession.[8]

One-hundred and twenty-five questions were developed around these themes. These questions were then asked of teachers, both average and above-average as rated by students and administrators. Of these 125 questions, 32 were found to differentiate between average and above-average teachers. It is this set of 32 questions, four for each theme, that constitute the EMPATHY interview. Normally, one question on each theme is asked. If a candidate's score is ambiguous, another set of questions for that theme is administered. Interestingly, the interview focuses neither on pedagogical skills (except insofar as some orientations are consonant with some teaching "skills") nor on subject-matter knowledge.

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[8] Ibid., pp. 438-439.

In addition to prescreening applicants, the Central Office coordinates meetings between eligible applicants and principals of schools where vacancies occur. Principals are required to report all vacancies to the Central Office within 24 hours. Notice of these vacancies is available on a taped telephone message that applicants may call. Applicants enhance their chances of getting hired by calling the principals of schools where vacancies exist rather than by waiting to receive a call for an interview (as the system intends). This is a cumbersome and expensive strategy for an out-of-state applicant to pursue.

When a principal calls the Central Office for a referral, a supervisor will refer one to three applicants. Some principals ask the supervisor to rate the applicants but others prefer to make their own assessment. The Central Office attempts to match the applicant and the school for a "good fit."

According to Frank Farmer, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, there is a good balance between centralization and decentralization and principals are very important to the process. Rapport for a good working relationship between the teacher and principal is established through the selection process. Principals can say, "You're working for me, not Ed Dobbins or some one down in the Central Office." Yet, the Central Office retains a good measure of control through the process of prescreening. Beyond setting minimum standards, the Central Office must enforce the racial quotas. Still the prevailing sentiment is "We feel that if an individual gets where they want to be, everyone is better off."

THE PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN SELECTION

Hiring is "sacred" to principals and it is very important to them that Shelton gives them a free hand in hiring. Curiously, although hiring is clearly of paramount importance, greater centralization "wouldn't bother me" according to one principal. He did add that "but if they don't meet our criteria we have to be able to send them back and get more." Clearly, he does not want to cede the option to choose. The marriage between centralization and decentralization is considered by one principal to be the best of both worlds. The Central Office supervisors interview all applicants at the initial screening for new hires. Principals are encouraged to interview only eligible persons, but some prefer to find their own applicants. Some principals recruit aggressively; others just wait for people to come to them. "Informal criteria" such as language, clothes, and appearance often strongly influence where applicants are referred or hired.

More than one principal reported that they were able to fulfill their hiring requirements with teachers transferring from other schools in the system. One high school principal noted that many people apply directly to the school. The principal of an elementary school said that he selects his teachers from those applying for transfers. Some of these transfers express a preference for his school and he is able to choose from among them. Another principal mentioned that teachers approach him for interviews. These are generally schools that are attractive to teachers because of their location, student body composition, and general reputation. Other schools must recruit teachers to fill vacancies.

When asked what they looked for in a candidate, principals often gave answers that echoed the values fostered by the Central Office and added some specific qualities. For example, one principal said she looked for: subject area competence, organizational skills, appearance, personality, flexibility, and communication with kids. To judge subject competency, she might ask for a writing sample from an English teacher or an Individual Education Plan from a Special Education teacher.

Another principal valued enthusiasm highly saying, "You don't have to be brilliant to teach; you need energy and enthusiasm, extra dedication, a willingness to take on extra projects. Self-initiative is necessary." This principal also expects a teacher she hires to be a conscientious and hard worker and to possess a pleasant personality. She also looks for expertise in the subject field. She does not judge this from an applicant's grades but prefers to get references and intern reports. Where possible, she prefers to watch an applicant teaching. An elementary school principal had a similar list of criteria: excellent appearance, out-going, self-assured, witty, skilled at human relations, and verbally adept. He considers an applicant's dedication to the profession and how he or she feels about children. He also looks for people who will follow school policy, rules, and procedures.

Most of the principals we interviewed reported using a variety of sources of information to arrive at a judgment about a candidate, including data provided by the Central Office. One principal felt assured that Central Office procedures let him know he is interviewing an eligible applicant. A principal who was trained as an interpreter of the scores was impressed with the EMPATHY interview as a source of information. Another principal felt that the information gained from the EMPATHY interview was pretty close to his own criteria. Two principals mentioned using a personal checklist to tally desirable qualities in a candidate. Some items mentioned were: goals, aspirations, strengths, weaknesses, enthusiasm, and "what can you do for this school?"

References were considered important and were always verified. For teachers who were transferring within the district, the teacher's current principal was called. An assistant principal who frequently called references said she knew all of the principals and was able to assess their recommendations. Most principals, she thought, tell her the truth. A principal may call downtown for the evaluation results of experienced teachers wishing to transfer, but this is a rare step. Evidently, principals feel that they cannot rely on the results of the district's regular evaluation process.

Principals also sought input from their staffs. The Department Head and the Assistant Principal for Curriculum were included in the interview process at some schools. Some Department Heads will observe teacher candidates. One high school uses a team approach. The principal and two others make selection decisions, then the Department Head will veto the appointment if the applicant does not know the subject well. Where joint decisions are made, there is usually fairly good agreement on the type of teacher sought.

Before a principal can hire new teachers the transfer pool must be emptied. During the spring a list of transfers is compiled by the Central Office. Teachers may transfer voluntarily, to work at a school closer to home, for example. Involuntary transfers are also listed. Involuntary transfers occur when there are too many teachers at a school or too many of one specialty. The principal chooses which teachers to place on the transfer list usually considering seniority. Voluntary transfers are generally considered more desirable hires than are involuntary transfers because sometimes principals use the involuntary transfer as a means to move less desirable teachers. Principals try to fill vacancies in their schools during a two-week transfer period.

Teachers who do not have appointments by the end of the spring transfer period take part in a meeting where the remaining vacancies are posted. These teachers are ranked by seniority. The most senior teacher in the pool picks the job she or he wants, the next most senior person chooses a position and so forth. Every effort is made both by transferring teachers and by principals filling vacancies to complete the hiring process before this meeting is scheduled. The prevailing attitude is that teachers who have not been hired by this time are probably not good candidates. "People in the pool aren't wanted elsewhere. You can really get hurt by having to take teachers in the pool." After the pool is emptied, a second transfer period begins which may last until school begins in the fall.

Principals have various strategies for dealing with the two-week transfer period and the pool. A clever principal can manipulate a poor teacher into the pool by anticipating vacancies. The following example was hypothesized by one principal. Suppose there is a poor kindergarten teacher in the school and the principal expects to lose a unit next year or the year after, the strategy would be to hire a very senior kindergarten teacher for a current vacancy. When it comes time to let one of the teachers go, the more senior, and presumably better, teacher will remain.

It is important for a principal to use the transfer period so as not to get a poor teacher from the pool. If it is expected that there will be a poor geometry teacher in the pool and a principal knows he will need to hire a geometry teacher, he will make an effort to get a competent teacher during the transfer period. Recruiting from other schools is through an informal network or grapevine. Intermediaries are used to avoid offending other principals who might feel that their schools were being "raided." Sometimes it is possible to have good teachers in the pool who are there simply because they are junior.

The results of these strategies vary by school. At one rural school, there were 30 vacancies on the faculty of 124. Five of these vacancies were Department Head positions. Teachers at this school had a long and dangerous commute and were required to be at work at an unusually early starting time (6:45 am). The principal of this school felt that he got the "left-overs" and that the school has been a "high-turnover stepping stone." He expected to choose 75 percent of the teachers to fill current vacancies and to receive 25 percent of the new staff from the pool. He expected that this school would be the last school chosen by the pool. He felt that teachers usually attempt to choose the school closest to their home with the reputation of the school being a secondary consideration. Others concurred that certain schools may have to take more people from the pool and that many of these will be rural schools. Principals who are successful in recruiting often attribute their success to such characteristics as well-behaved students, parent affluence, or academic reputation, i.e., factors outside the selection process.

Not coincidentally, the schools with high turnover are also the schools that have difficulty meeting the targeted racial quota. The principal who claimed that he rarely needed to hire new people also said that he had no problem with racial quotas and that he was "on target." Another principal of a low turnover school also reported an 80:20 racial balance and no problems. He did remark, however, that there were fewer black applicants in recent years. Another successful recruiter said she had no problems with racial quotas among her highly experienced teachers.

Of those principals who mentioned not meeting mandated racial quotas, only one was very positive about recruitment in general. This principal has a low turnover at her school, only one or two new teachers each year. She attributed successful recruitment efforts to the reputation of the school. Nonetheless, blacks constitute only 5 percent of the faculty instead of the necessary 20 percent. Another principal who mentioned difficulty meeting racial quotas also discussed the difficulties of recruitment in general: high turnover, relatively inexperienced staff, and the large number of new teachers who are required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Program. Only five teachers in this rural school are black; 21 are needed to meet the quota.

When faced with hiring difficulties, principals resort to describing incentives such as the climate. Yet, as one principal said, "Beaches only go so far." Most principals were concerned with salaries. Some directed their concern at the effect of low beginning salaries on hiring and others at the effect of a low salary schedule on retention. They were concerned with both attracting and retaining teachers, especially men. They felt that more money was needed because they lose new teachers after three to five years and that young men needed to hold two or three jobs to earn enough money.

FLORIDA BEGINNING TEACHER PROGRAM

The Florida Beginning Teacher Program (BTP) was developed to aid teacher development during an initial year of supervised induction through a comprehensive program of support, training, and documentation of the mastery of teaching competencies. Beginning in the 1982-83 school year, all first year teachers were required to participate in this program to obtain certification. Teachers with out-of-state certificates and less than three years of teaching experience were also required to participate. Mastery of teaching competencies is the basis for regular certification.

Each beginning teacher has the support of a team consisting of the principal or a building level administrator, a designated peer teacher, and one other professional educator, usually an area or Central Office supervisor or a university professor. Each beginning teacher and his or her support team develop an individual professional development plan. Observations are made using a standard instrument. Feedback and assistance are provided. A record is kept of the beginning teacher's progress toward mastery of the required competencies.

Although the BTP has been in place only a short time, it is clear that several changes are needed to make the program effective. The most frequently cited weakness was the lack of time to implement the program properly. A principal with more than one or two beginning teachers may not have the time to provide adequate support. Peer teachers are not always given enough released time to participate adequately in the program. The other professional educator may not have adequate time for the program. Other problems with the program, such as poor coordination, poor communication, and too much paperwork, are all traceable to the fact that no special budget was created to cover the costs of the program. Thus, support team members must take time from their other duties to participate in the program. As a result, the full potential of the program has yet to be realized.

The number of new teachers at a school affects the administration of the Beginning Teacher Program. If a large number of the faculty are new teachers, the program is a significant burden for administrators. For example, a principal at a rural school has 14 new teachers among a faculty of 124. Only 57 teachers of his staff have five or more years of experience, significantly less than the average for the system. This principal had only two beginning teachers in his previous school and finds it hard to operate the program for 14 teachers.

Other principals agree that the program is time-consuming. Some avoid hiring teachers who must participate in the program. Principals who do not need to hire many new teachers were generally more enthusiastic about the program although all expressed some concern about the time required to administer it. One principal remarked that the BTP was "excellent" and that it "forces you to do what you'd like to do otherwise." Another found the program "interesting" and felt it could be a useful tool for termination. However, he, too, noted that it was time-consuming and therefore "something else gets neglected."

Opinion on the Beginning Teacher Program varied among participants. A frequent complaint about the program was the amount of paperwork required. Sometimes an experienced teacher who was not certified in Florida was required to participate and this caused resentment. One teacher felt "humiliated" and "essentially demoted" because her experience was not valued. At the other end of the experience scale, a new teacher could miss participating in the program if she or he began teaching in the middle of the year. Teachers who were certified before the program was instituted were glad to have "escaped that BTP."

Occasionally, a new teacher was not able to develop a productive relationship with his or her peer teacher. This could be due to circumstances such as incompatible schedules. Sometimes a teacher said that his/her peer teacher gave only criticism or that needed information about routines was not shared. More often, however, a new teacher felt that his peer teacher was helpful and that some of the ideas were good. In another case "everyone was in there for the first month, then I never saw them again." The program was viewed as "trial and error" with "not much support" when such situations occurred.

Perhaps more important than the Beginning Teacher Program is the general atmosphere of support and assistance reported by most teachers. The same teacher who remarked that formal conferences were infrequent also made a positive statement about a supportive environment. Most new teachers felt they could go to a teacher in their specialty, sometimes even one at another school. After a week-long in-service program, an elementary school teacher reported that she knew whom to ask for help. In one school, teachers went to the principal who had an "open-door" policy.

Even though most teachers mentioned a generally supportive atmosphere, most felt they were "basically thrown to the wolves." Another teacher who described the teaching environment as generally supportive nonetheless planned to leave teaching because she felt that she was not effective. This was in spite of a complimentary evaluation from her Department Head. Perhaps some individuals need more than a "generally" supportive environment and a more structured support system will be required to successfully induct new teachers.

TEACHERS' VIEWS OF THE SELECTION PROCESS AND BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT

In general, teachers who were interviewed about the selection process for the Hillsborough district felt that the application process was conducted fairly and that the interviews were thorough. Some applicants confessed to being nervous during the initial interview at the Central Office. One teacher feared she had "made mistakes in the EMPATHY interview"; another found the EMPATHY interview "interesting." The interview did make the process seem formal and certainly communicated to teachers that they had to pass this phase before they would be considered further.

Opinion was divided on the role of the Central Office in the selection process. Some teachers found that they needed to take the initiative to find jobs because "you could not rely on the Central Office." Some found the search worthwhile because they could check out local schools. Others were dismayed that the Central Office was not more helpful. The system of calling for a recorded message in the Central Office was labelled a "rat race called the tape" by a dissatisfied teacher. On the other hand, some teachers had very positive experiences. A teacher who interviewed with four different schools was hired when an opening came up in early August. She felt that the interview process was a simple and positive experience. Another teacher began the process with the Central Office where she was told of openings and was given phone numbers. At the school, she was interviewed by the Department Head and the principal and hired all in one day. This teacher was the most positive regarding involvement of the Central Office saying that Hillsborough was better organized than the last county where she had hunted for a job.

Many interviewees indicated that the key to getting hired is to "work the system" informally in addition to meeting the formal requirements. Half of the teachers interviewed had contact with the district before being hired. Typically, this contact was an intern or a substitute teacher. Often a student teacher advisor or principal will counsel a new teacher to "call around," occasionally suggesting which schools to call. One teacher mentioned that a principal she had worked for was her primary contact and that getting hired would have been difficult otherwise. "Getting on the list is not enough." As if to demonstrate the importance of having a contact in the system, one applicant tried it both ways. She did not know anyone in the school district when she applied initially and was not hired. She then worked for the city's Recreation Department where she got to know a school system coach who then helped her find a position.

Although many of the teachers hired by Hillsborough had previous contact with the school or the district, working in the school district was *not* the reason most teachers came to Tampa. Frequently, the teacher had been a student at the University of South Florida and had applied to Hillsborough because she or he was already living in Tampa and it was convenient to do so. Another common reason for applying to Hillsborough was to accompany a spouse who had found employment in Tampa or was a student at the university. Consistent with the theme of convenience, others took advantage of course offerings for certification at the university while working as substitutes in the Hillsborough district. While living and working in the district, they became certified and were subsequently hired.

Among those who applied to other school districts, nearby Pinellas County was mentioned most frequently. The two largest school systems in Florida, Dade and Broward Counties, were also mentioned. Even among teachers who applied to other districts, Hillsborough was their first choice. (Of course, we interviewed only teachers hired by Hillsborough!) One teacher mentioned visiting Tampa and liking the city so much she decided to move there. A teacher from Maine noted that the weather in Tampa was definitely "a plus."

Although the decision to teach at Hillsborough was usually made for reasons that were external to the district, the decision to become a teacher was usually an active choice. Many teachers made comments such as "I always wanted to be a teacher" or "I've wanted since high school to be a teacher" or "I idolized teachers." Some teachers had parents who were teachers. Teachers also expressed an interest in children and a desire for variety and flexibility in their careers.

Others came to the teaching profession through less direct routes. One teacher had a B.A. in speech and then decided to teach. Another teacher worked at a mental health institute for retarded children. Yet another teacher had a degree in music and decided that teaching was practical. Similarly, a teacher with a degree in commercial art began to teach as a substitute to earn a living and decided subsequently to become certified. Other teachers reported becoming interested in the profession after being encouraged by fellow church-members or after volunteering in the schools.

A few teachers came to the profession because they sought a major change from their previous career. In one case the teacher's previous career was in health, another had been in accounting, and one was in sales. Only the teacher who was previously in sales was dissatisfied with his decision to try teaching. Infrequently a teacher would say they chose teaching by default, i.e., because "I didn't know what else to do with an English degree."

These are opinions of individual teachers about the policies in the district. The views expressed by Terry Wilson, Assistant Executive Director of the CTA, were more strongly stated. Wilson indicated that the CTA was opposed to decentralization of hiring. He felt that many principals were not skilled in interviewing techniques. This resulted in different hiring practices leaving room for favoritism and, perhaps, in not hiring the best qualified teachers. Wilson felt that outlying areas were most disadvantaged by this practice. This is consistent with remarks made by principals of rural schools about the difficulties they experience in recruitment.

To counteract these problems, Wilson advocated more Central Office control. Wilson would like to see the Central Office screen all applicants and place the names of qualified persons on a list from which principals could choose. As the system functions now, a teacher can go to a school and "get" a job and then go to the office to complete the paperwork. He felt there were very few "cold" hires from the Central Office and those only in shortage areas or to hire blacks.

The CTA wants to be involved in the selection process. CTA staff would like a system of interviewing teams at the Central Office that would include a CTA staff member or an executive board member or a teacher released from class for this purpose. In the past, the CTA was involved in the screening for administrative positions, but no longer. It also has no involvement in screening for Department Heads or curriculum specialists.

Wilson felt that the BTP worked well where it was being taken seriously. He did not see any obvious drawbacks but was uncomfortable about the amount of discretion it afforded to principals. Wilson would prefer to give the Central Office more control to ensure impartiality.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Although the duties of the Central Office of the Hillsborough County School District have increased over the years, the selection process remains essentially decentralized. Although Central Office personnel recruit and interview applicants, determine their eligibility, and coordinate candidates with vacancies, principals interview candidates and make the final selection. This division of responsibility seemed to satisfy both Central Office administrators and principals and is described by many principals as the best of both worlds.

Central Office and school administrators were pleased with the applicants who sought employment with the district. Among administrators, there was a consensus that they were interviewing and hiring teachers who were better trained than ever. Most administrators expressed faith in the EMPATHY interview as a tool for screening applicants; this was particularly true of Central Office administrators. The general attitude was that the EMPATHY interview was a very professional way to screen potential candidates and that its use enhanced the selection process. The Director of Instructional Personnel, Ed Dobbins, told of a candidate who seemed wonderful but who did poorly on the EMPATHY interview. Subsequently, it was learned that he had been fired from another district for stealing. Other Central Office administrators related similar anecdotes. The use of the EMPATHY interview lends the appearance of objectivity to the overall process.

However, there were aspects of the recruitment and selection process that Central Office administrators and principals felt needed improvement. Chief among these concerns was the increasing difficulty of maintaining standards while filling vacancies in shortage areas. Hillsborough is competing with other occupations and professions as well as other school districts, especially when recruiting mathematics and science teachers. One Central Office supervisor noted that they had been having to place teachers out of field for several years. To limit this effect, they try to hire teachers close to certification. Another strategy is to hire liberal arts graduates, generally not the first choice among applicants. In spite of these coping strategies, administrators fear that shortages will only get worse. Some principals had difficulties meeting racial quotas. Working against achievement of racial balance in these schools is that current applicant pools contain proportionately fewer black teachers than in the past.

Recruitment of new teachers is hindered by the requirement to hire all teachers in the transfer pool before filling vacancies with new recruits. The uncertainties created by the transfer pool were consistently mentioned by principals. Much effort is apparently given to avoiding the consequences of getting a bad teacher from the pool. During an extended internal transfer process, Hillsborough loses the opportunity to hire recruits who receive offers of employment more promptly from other districts.

Other flaws in the recruitment and selection process were also evident from comments made by the teachers who were recently hired. Although some teachers were pleased with the way the Central Office handled their applications, others were disappointed about required procedures. Teachers felt that the Central Office did not adequately coordinate information about vacancies. These teachers were frequently frustrated by the length of the hiring process; several who applied in the spring were hired after the beginning of the school year.

Most important among criticisms from teachers is the charge that working the system informally is a prerequisite to getting hired. In many cases, a teacher can go to a school and "get" a job and then go to the Central Office to complete the paperwork. In these instances, the Central Office is no more than a rubber stamp.

These problems reveal that the process is not as centralized as Central Office personnel believe. Many of the recent changes toward centralization may be only superficial. Paperwork may be processed and credentials may be verified, but no significant screening of applicants may take place. The EMPATHY interview is not used as a pass/fail mechanism. Nearly anyone who is certifiable will be deemed eligible for employment. The actual (as opposed to symbolic) effects of the EMPATHY interview are, thus, difficult to determine. Although the Central Office eliminates totally unqualified applicants, the major decisions are those made at the schools.

An advantage to reliance on the informal aspects of the system is that principals are hiring a "known quantity," someone they have had an opportunity to observe teaching. The disadvantage is that the system does not systematically select the best candidates, but, instead, hires the most aggressive or persistent. Another disadvantage of relying on informal connections is the discouraging effect on out-of-state candidates, an increasingly important source of recruits for Hillsborough and for Florida.

Unfortunately, district procedures and state policies interact in more than one place to cause difficulty in recruitment and selection. Florida legislation on teacher competency testing has been a greater obstacle to black applicants than to white applicants. In addition to this, fewer black college students are seeking to become teachers. Students at predominantly black institutions may also find themselves affected by the tie between the Florida Teacher Competency Exam and the education program's accreditation. Teacher salaries are another problem shared by school districts in Florida and in Hillsborough County in particular.

A less clear example of how state and local policy interact is the Beginning Teacher Program. When there are a large number of new teachers in a school, the BTP becomes an administrative burden. However, in schools where just a few teachers are new, the program becomes a source of support and may enhance retention. The potential benefit is great, as Hillsborough currently has an unusually high rate of turnover.

To improve the recruitment and selection process in Hillsborough, the Central Office must use its authority to greater advantage. A set of procedures is in place, but procedures are not followed as prescribed. The Central Office also needs to adhere to a hiring schedule. Too many teachers are hired after the school year has begun.

The Central Office could also improve its coordination function. For example, the Central Office has information on vacancies and information on new applicants as well as transfers. Personnel there are in a position to coordinate people and positions in a systematic fashion. In the current process, records are kept in folders and it is not clear how teachers are referred to schools. At the time of this case study, plans were under way to keep personnel data on a computer. If an automated data system were implemented, information would be more readily available and could be sorted according to need. For example, if a mathematics teacher were needed at a particular school, applicant records could be sorted by subject area to yield a complete list of candidates prepared to teach mathematics. Other characteristics that would be useful to record are extracurricular activities sponsored, race, locality preferred, and rating. The rating is a composite of the applicant's transcript and performance on the EMPATHY interview and the basic interview. With such a system in place, it would be possible to give a principal who needs a mathematics teacher who is also black a list of black mathematics teachers who prefer to teach in the principal's locality ranked according to their composite rating. The improved information flow could upgrade the quality of the instructional staff. Ideally, promptly provided information would improve the chances of hiring an applicant who might otherwise accept a job offer in another school district.

More concerted organization of the matching process also might improve the problem of subject area shortages. It should also improve the problem of schools that do not meet racial quotas. An improved referral process could even contribute to improved administration of the BTP. Careful matching of teachers and schools could disperse beginning teachers among more schools so that no one school would be unduly burdened by the BTP. However, the solution to this problem might require changes in the assignment policies governing experienced teachers.

Although the district recruits in other states, most candidates seek out the district. Moreover, many of these candidates do not actively seek out the district, but have chosen Tampa either for personal reasons or for the amenities the city offers. The district is merely the nearest source of employment. Fortunately, the district is in an expanding area and the university also makes it a desirable location. However, as long as the district has an adequate pool of applicants and is pleased with the quality of the teachers it hires, it is difficult to say how serious this situation is. It is only when shortages are encountered, when quality declines, and when quotas are not met that the process may be deemed inadequate. If the problem is deemed serious enough, this may be the incentive for a more thorough reform in the district, including the salary schedule and support for beginning teachers.

Case Study 5

TEACHER SELECTION IN THE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ROCHESTER

Emil J. Haller

INTRODUCTION

The City of Rochester, part of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) of nearly one million people, is located just south of Lake Ontario in upstate New York. According to the 1980 census, Rochester itself has a population of nearly a quarter of a million people. The city's diversified economic base is dominated by photographic and electronics firms, with Eastman Kodak being by far the largest employer.

The city's school system is an old one. The district was established in 1841 as a consolidation of several small systems and private schools. Over the next century enrollments grew, reaching a peak of 53,700 in 1930. Today, the system serves 32,830 pupils in 44 schools. It employs 2,617 people, 1,295 of whom are classroom teachers. Thus, Rochester's school district is the third largest in New York State, trailing New York City and Buffalo.

In a district of this size, a substantial number of new teachers must be recruited each year. The district has evolved well-established procedures for accomplishing this task. Numerous aspects of these procedures may be of interest to other systems developing their own recruiting practices and will be discussed below. At the same time, other aspects of Rochester's recruiting procedures, seemingly products of a period of teacher surplus, appear problematic in a time of teacher scarcity. These, too, will be discussed.

Beneath the particulars of teacher recruiting, however, the City School District of Rochester illustrates some of the benefits and tensions that may arise in balancing the need for systemwide coordination, administrative autonomy, and political control in large school systems. But before we turn to these matters, it will be useful to describe the context that shapes recruiting policy and practice in Rochester.

POLICY CONTEXT

In a complex urban environment, the conditions that shape a school district's policies are numerous, subtle, and difficult to discern. Rochester is no exception. However, at least eight contextual factors seem important--"seem" in the sense that they turned up repeatedly in discussions of staffing procedures and in the documents collected during this study. These factors are: the district's changing demographic characteristics, students' academic achievement, the political organization of the district, the Rochester Teachers' Association (RTA), New York's Board of Regents, the district's aging staff, and its relatively high degree of administrative centralization. Each of these is discussed in the following pages.

Demography

The City of Rochester and its school district have experienced dramatic demographic changes over the last two decades. Three of these are particularly pertinent. The population of the city has declined sharply--from 318,611 in 1960 to 241,741 in 1980, a decrease of nearly 25 percent.[1] Simultaneously, the percentage of its residents classified as white by the census has decreased from 92.4 percent to 69.5 percent. The age structure of the city has also changed. In 1960, the percentage of its residents under age five was 10.1; in 1980, that figure stood at 7.6.

These changes have interacted to create even more dramatic shifts in school populations. Over the decade, enrollments have dropped nearly 22 percent. The percentage of white pupils has declined even faster than that group's decline in the population as a whole--by 45.6 percent. Although the absolute number of black students declined slightly over this time period, proportionately it increased nearly 10 percent. Finally, there has been a steady increase in the number of students classified as Spanish surname.

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[1] All figures reported in this and the succeeding sections are drawn either from the U.S. census or *Data-Base 1983-84*, a report prepared by the City School District, Rochester, New York.

This loss of white pupils has not been entirely due to their movement to the surrounding suburbs. A significant number of Rochester's school-age children attend private and parochial schools. During the 1982-83 school year, nearly 8,000 pupils, slightly over 18 percent of all students, were so enrolled.

These trends continue. In the current year (1984-85), enrollment stands at 32,830; 34.5 percent white, 51.4 percent black, 11.5 percent Spanish surname, and 2.7 percent "other" (primarily Asian-American).

These demographic changes have played an important part in educational politics and policy in Rochester. The past 20 years have been marked by strenuous (and often conflictive) efforts on the part of educators and civic leaders, both white and black, to develop and maintain a desegregated school system. Desegregation suits, voluntary and involuntary transfer plans, protests, one of the nation's first interdistrict student exchange programs, boycotts, the introduction of magnet schools, and federal court orders are but a few of the more salient events. At times, school politics in Rochester could be fairly described as tumultuous.

For our purposes, there are three significant outcomes of this tumult. First, the numerous conflicts over integration and racial balance that marked the 1960-80 period have subsided. In their residue is a firm belief in the value of desegregated schooling. Second, an affirmative action policy adopted in 1974 initiated an aggressive program of minority recruitment, which continues to this date. (District administrators claim to have a better record in recruiting minority teachers than any other school system in the state.) Finally, the last outcome, and perhaps the most important one for teacher recruitment, cannot be assessed by simply computing percentages of the staff who are black, white, or Hispanic. It is the attempt on the part of the district's personnel administrators to ensure that the people they do hire--whether minority or not--are aware of the schools' heterogeneity and of the special importance placed on ensuring the achievement of minority children.

Student Achievement

The changing socioeconomic composition of the city has been reflected in changes in the usual measures of academic achievement and attainment. By the mid-1970s, mean achievement levels had fallen substantially below the state average, and even below the average of "The Big Five" (Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Rochester, and Yonkers), the other large city districts in New York to which comparisons are usually made. The percentage of seniors graduating high school declined. SAT scores, both verbal and math, have been consistently below national averages. There has been (and are) significant disparities in the performance of various ethnic groups. For example, on the one hand, 42 percent of the district's Caucasian pupils scored in the highest quartile on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (for reading). On the other hand, only 16 percent of the black and 15 percent of the Hispanic students scored in the highest quartile on the same test.

The decline in student achievement and the disparity between various ethnic groups is an important aspect of the policy context in Rochester. The community's civic leadership, its school board, and the district's professional staff have devoted considerable attention and effort to halting and then reversing these trends. To a notable extent, they seem to have been successful: By many of the usual measures, the city's pupils now stand at or near state averages and above those of "The Big Five." However, the disparity between minority and majority children remains, and it is a matter of major concern reflected in the district's recruiting practices.

The Political Organization of the School District

An important aspect of the context of school policy in Rochester is the political organization of its Board of Education. That board is unusual in a number of respects.

Perhaps the first thing to note is that the district is fiscally dependent; its Board of Education is not empowered to levy taxes. Rather, the district submits its budget to the Rochester City Council, which, following negotiations, incorporates this request into its general tax levy. Since school personnel costs have very substantial fiscal implications for city government, these costs are reviewed more closely by the city council than is usual in most American communities.[2]

More unusual is the board's election. The Rochester Board of Education is chosen on a partisan basis. This was a long-standing arrangement that was ended in 1971, on the grounds that schools should be "removed from politics." However, partisan elections were reinstituted a decade later, in part to improve the board's opportunity to influence the flow of funds from the city council.[3] As one person remarked, this arrangement illustrates a recognition on the part of Rochester's political leadership that the fate of the public schools and that of the city are inextricably intertwined.

Further, board members are paid, currently at the rate of $10,000 per year. Although this amount is something less than princely, it is intended to recognize the time and effort that members are expected to devote to their role. One has the impression that more of these resources are so devoted than is usual; 30 to 35 hours a week devoted to board business is not uncommon.

It should also be noted that Rochester's Board of Education is organized into standing committees, one of which is the Personnel Committee. This committee meets regularly with the Supervising Director of Personnel, and its members are rather more expert on these matters than is typical of board members in other communities.

Finally, each board member has responsibility for a specific subset of the district's schools. This arrangement has encouraged members to become more familiar with the day-to-day operation of the district than is usual, and to recognize the effect of board policy on educational practice in the district. One member estimated that she spends at least one full day each year in each of her six schools, meeting with the principal, the union representative, teachers, and parents. Further, a quite deliberate attempt is made to apprise each parent of who "their" board member is--i.e., the member who is responsible for their child's school. Each parent in Rochester receives the name and phone number of the appropriate person to call on the board if questions or concerns arise.

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[2] The council does not have a line item veto on the school budget, however; at least officially the only matter for negotiation is the total amount of the district's budget.

[3] During its nonpartisan period, the board was said to command little political respect and was rendered impotent in its dealings with other representative bodies--the state legislature as well as the city council.

The net result of all of these arrangements has been to produce a politically sophisticated board of education. This is a board whose members devote considerable time to their tasks, who are potentially capable of influencing and being influenced by the city's political elite, who are somewhat expert in regard to specific administrative practices, and who are knowledgeable about the problems and concerns of particular schools and groups of parents in the community.

The RTA

An important contextual factor in the district's teacher recruitment and selection policies is its employees' unions. The Rochester Teachers' Association, Local 616 (AFL-CIO), was recognized in 1964 as the sole bargaining agent for classroom teachers. Current relations between the union and the school system were described as "still guarded," in the aftermath of an acrimonious strike that closed the district's schools in September 1980. School administrators, including persons holding relatively high-level appointments in the central administration, are represented by their own union. Finally (and unusually), the system's substitute teachers have recently organized and have negotiated their first contract. To this point, none of these three groups has taken a particular interest in teacher recruitment and selection. Indeed, one administrator termed the relationship between the RTA and the district as "cooperative" in regards to these matters. However, as will be discussed below, the indirect influence of the union on recruitment is considerable.

The New York Board of Regents

It is generally recognized that New York's Board of Regents and the State Education Department are among the most powerful of the 50 states. The decisions of these agencies are having a profound impact on teacher recruitment and selection. For example, a newly implemented teacher competency act includes a requirement that prospective teachers attain passing scores on the revised National Teacher Examination (NTE). Although it is still too early to assess, some respondents voiced a concern that these tests might adversely affect the district's ability to hire minority staff.

If the effect of the NTE is a matter of speculation, the effect of the so-called "Regents Action Plan" is already manifest. This plan, a response to the calls for "excellence" in education, mandates sweeping revisions in, inter alia, the requirements for a high school diploma. For example, it has created an instant shortage of foreign language teachers. The Action Plan requires that high school graduates have at least two years of a foreign language before they receive a "Regents' Diploma" (a certificate awarded for completing a college-preparatory curriculum). Since there are relatively few students preparing to teach these subjects in New York's colleges and universities, it is certain that an intensified out-of-state recruiting effort will be required. Similar consequences arise from the regents' new mandates regarding education in computers, social studies, and special education.

A Graying Staff

Last year, Rochester hired 259 new teachers, 36 percent more than the previous year. This substantial increase is not thought to be a random "spike" but the leading edge of a pattern of growing need. This growth is a function of several factors. Perhaps the most important of these is the aging of the staff--219 teachers and administrators reached age 55 in 1983 and were eligible for retirement. In 1984, the figure was 270, and it will be 307 next year. There is an increasing tendency for teachers to retire at that age. In addition, the district recently implemented a highly attractive early retirement plan for its administrators. A substantial increase in departures from the ranks of management is expected to result. Since Rochester operates an intensive administrative development program and deliberately promotes from within, the vacancies created by administrative retirements will be reflected in an increased need for classroom teachers to replace those promoted to leadership positions.

Administrative Centralization

One of the most notable things about the Rochester School District is its relatively high degree of bureaucratization and centralization. It evidences many of the classic bureaucratic characteristics to a degree unusual for U.S. school systems, many of which might be more appropriately described as organized anarchies. To describe the district in this way is not to speak pejoratively. The district is not, for example, strangling in its own red tape. Instead, its bureaucratization may be one of its chief assets: Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, lines of authority are specified, known, and followed, the need to coordinate is recognized, and rules bear a rational relation to the functions they govern. Similarly, decisionmaking in the district is centralized to a notable degree.

Sometimes this bureaucratization and centralization is manifest. For example, the district's "3-Year Plan"[4] is an extensive, integrated, and detailed planning document that addresses a wide array of topics and problems (e.g., dropouts, curriculum coordination, achievement, fiscal planning, and sex education). This plan has received national recognition for its quality. The coordination and implementation of its numerous projects is primarily in the hands of Central Office staff. At other times, centralization is less obvious. For instance, in the case of teacher recruitment and selection, nearly everyone agreed that principals have the final say over which teachers will work in their schools. However, as we shall see, various centrally administered personnel procedures work to significantly constrain principals' choices, effectively transferring decisionmaking to district headquarters.

All of these factors--concern over racial balance and improving the educational achievement of all children, a politically sensitive board, a powerful teachers' union, state educational reform, a graying staff, and the district's centralized mode of organization--provide the context of Rochester's recruiting policies. We turn to the specifics of these policies next.

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[4] This plan, adopted in 1982 by the board, contains numerous initiatives aimed at improving the educational attainment of pupils. The plan is notable for its comprehensiveness, its level of detail, and the coordination it requires. It is certain that without centralized control and a high level of bureaucratization, this plan could not succeed.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Personnel staffing is the responsibility of the Supervising Director of Personnel, who is assisted by two directors, each responsible for hiring in specific subject or certification areas. Another key department involved in teacher selection and recruitment is that of Curriculum Development and Support, which contains subject area directors who interview teaching candidates in their specialties. Also in the same division and under the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, there are several supervising directors, each responsible for a number of elementary or secondary schools and to whom principals report. Among their responsibilities, these supervising directors coordinate and consolidate the staff requirements for the schools under their control. Finally, principals may be directly involved in teacher selection.

The following pages are organized around the various aspects of school staffing in Rochester: manpower planning, developing an applicant pool, interviewing, and selecting teachers. The special case of recruiting from among substitutes is also described.

Manpower Planning

The district devotes considerable effort to estimating accurately its future personnel needs. Detailed planning begins early in the school year and is carried out in the Central Office. Liaison is maintained with the county office that keeps birth records, and an attempt is made to predict the incoming kindergarten population. Since the district has kept close tabs on births and subsequent enrollments for many years, it has developed a factor which, when applied to births, yields a gross estimate of districtwide kindergarten enrollments five years later. Kindergarten enrollments are predicted for each school. These projections are then modified on the basis of consultations with elementary school principals. Enrollments in subsequent grades are estimated using a standard cohort survival technique, and these figures are again modified on the basis of information from building administrators. When contractual obligations regarding pupil-teacher ratios are applied to these estimates, an approximation of the number of teachers required to staff the schools is produced. These figures are again adjusted for each school by the known and expected number of retirements, leaves, and resignations.

When reasonably firm figures are achieved for each school, vacancy notices are posted internally. At this point, any staff members who have been made redundant by enrollment decline in their own schools are given the opportunity to transfer to schools that will need staff in their areas of certification. This is done by seniority and is a contractual obligation with the RTA. After these people have chosen a position, the remaining vacancies and any others that have developed are made available to any of the currently employed staff who have submitted a request for a voluntary transfer to a school with a vacancy. These, too, are allotted on the basis of seniority. Principals have no choice about accepting either excess or transferring teachers.

During this time, the district has a very firm idea of the number and type of new teachers it will need to hire for the coming year, but it does not know the actual locations to which new hires will be assigned. Obviously, however, that is much too late to begin recruiting. The process of building an applicant pool has to be started in earnest in January, using the preliminary estimates generated by district-level administrators.

Building an Applicant Pool

Although some Central Office staff are engaged in manpower planning, others in the personnel office are simultaneously engaged in planning and carrying out an extensive recruiting effort. Essentially, this consists of creating a pool of qualified applicants that is as large as possible, screening these applicants, referring suitable candidates to subject area directors and school principals for interviews and a recommendation, and finally, ensuring that the necessary appointments are made. Several aspects of these processes bear discussion.

In regard to building an applicant pool, the district devotes considerable effort to advertising. Extensive and attractive sets of recruiting literature have been developed and are periodically revised. The emphasis in this material is very strongly on the schools' ethnic diversity. These materials are formed into packets, which are sent to 245 colleges and other agencies. As the year progresses and specific needs become known, follow-up bulletins are sent to appropriate institutions. In addition, advertisements are placed in the *Association of School, College and University Staffing Annual*, the *Search Handbook for Educators*, the *New York Times*, *The San Juan Star*, local papers, and selected newspapers and magazines with wide minority circulation.

Rochester operates an extensive on-campus recruiting effort. During the spring of 1985, the two Directors of Personnel expect to visit 24 sites in a search for teaching candidates. Many of these sites are outside New York State--e.g., the University of Michigan, Ohio State, and the University of North Carolina. Campuses are selected so as to maximize the probability of contacting candidates who will meet the district's needs. Ohio State, for example, is visited because that institution has a large training program for special education teachers, an area of acute shortage in Rochester. Similarly, the commitment to affirmative action has led the system to recruit on several southern, predominantly black campuses.

The effectiveness of this advertising and out-of-state recruiting is unclear. Although precise figures were unavailable, it was generally agreed that the large majority of new staff members were not recruited through these means. Instead, most come from nearby colleges where active recruitment has taken place over the years. Nevertheless, some administrators argued that it is necessary to maintain a "presence" outside the local area. One person, commenting on visits to distant campuses, noted:

> It's necessary to build a trust factor. Our sense is that we have to be there even if we don't get anybody from that college every time. The placement people get to know who we are. If I need somebody during the summer, I can call that college. You build a trust factor. Particularly with the

> minority colleges. They have to know that Rochester, New York, is sincere, and you're not doing this because it looks good on paper.

An unusual aspect of choosing campuses to visit is the effort to coordinate recruiting with the city's major employers. As one person described this relationship:

> The further you go geographically away from your school district, the less likely you are to bring somebody back. . . . But if we didn't recruit, we'd just get the local walk-ins. Very few people will just come to Rochester, N.Y. They have a reason. They're coming to this locale anyway. We've gone to our local industries in the area, which are Kodak and Xerox, and sat down with their personnel people and asked "where do you go, what type of recruiting trail do you follow?" Within reason for us, we select as many of those colleges as have educational training programs. We try to tie into their recruiting.

Another important aspect of campus recruiting is the emphasis on consortia. Essentially, these comprise the teacher training institutions in a redefined geographical area. These institutions band together and provide a site where school districts can interview their graduates during a one- or two-day period. In 1985, Rochester recruiters will attend five of these, four in New York State and one in Boston. Consortia make it possible to increase the number of contacts for a given travel expenditure.

Another useful recruiting practice is the district's policy of interviewing throughout the year, regardless of vacancies. Many of Rochester's teachers got their jobs simply by appearing at the district's office to inquire about openings. Rather than turning them away if there is no vacancy, or merely having them fill out an application for the files, personnel directors conduct screening interviews, send the applicant to the relevant subject area director for further interviewing and evaluation, and encourage the applicant to call back frequently to check on the possibility of a job. Even at the height of the teacher glut, the district eschewed a "Don't call us, we'll call you" approach to recruiting.

Interviewing

Selecting new teachers depends heavily on the outcome of interviews. Typically, prospective secondary and special teachers are interviewed three times: on-campus or in the district's offices by the personnel directors, by the relevant subject area director, and by a building principal. Elementary school candidates are usually interviewed twice: by a personnel director and then by a principal.

The primary purpose of the initial interview is to screen candidates to ensure that each has the requisite certification, training, and experience. Considerable effort is devoted to assessing "potential for urban teaching"--whether an individual's attitudes, experience, and training fit him or her for teaching in ethnically diverse schools. For example, during an interview observed for this study, a college senior remarked that she had had a few discipline problems during her practice teaching experience. The interviewer, knowing that this practice teaching had been done in a racially mixed school, probed the nature of the few problems that had occurred. In response, the candidate described some relatively minor difficulties with "a few colored kids," and later spoke of these pupils as "those kids." Despite excellent grades in her subject area, this person was downgraded as a candidate for the city's schools.

A standard job description for a teacher has been adopted by the district (see Appendix A of this case study). Principals do not prepare job descriptions specifying particular qualifications they seek in a new staff member. Nor do they participate in recruiting trips. Instead, a standardized check sheet is used by personnel directors to rate candidates (see Appendix B of this case study). Very few persons are screened out at this point, unless, as one interviewer put it, they are "obvious dullards."

A somewhat unusual aspect of these initial interviews is the collection of a writing sample. In effect, the district has prepared a standardized essay test, requiring each applicant to respond to one of three "theme questions" with a 150 to 200 word essay written on the spot. The initial purpose of these was to assess the capacity of candidates to express themselves in a literate and cogent fashion.

Essays are reviewed for mechanics, development, organization, coherence, consistency, and syntax. Although these writing samples are still used for this purpose, they have also turned out to be useful for assessing the relative pedagogical abilities of competing candidates. That is, since the essay topics are fixed and concern various aspects of a teacher's role, they are also used to make substantive judgments about teaching skill. Essays become part of a candidate's credential file.

In the case of secondary teachers and teachers of special subjects, the next interview is conducted by the person in charge of the relevant subject area. These interviews tend to be wide-ranging, intensive, and long. No standardized format is necessarily followed, although some subject area directors have developed their own protocols. The primary emphasis is on competence in the specialty and the capacity to teach it. Careful attention is paid to the courses a candidate has taken in the subject and the grades earned. Particular attention may be given to discussions of the various approaches currently used to teach the specialty, with an attempt to ensure that the applicant is familiar with each approach, its rationale, and the reasons for any preference he or she might have. As in the preliminary interviews, an attempt is made to assess a candidate's capacity to teach in a multiethnic situation.

Finally, an attempt is made to assess a candidate's capacity to meet the needs of the children in a particular school. Subject area directors know where vacancies exist (or are likely to exist) in the following year. They attempt to become familiar with the nature of each school under their purview, and to know the teaching qualities sought by its administrator. Thus, they seek to match applicants with particular schools.

Final interviews are carried out by the school principal with those candidates referred to him or her by the Central Office (which may recommend a particular candidate). Secondary school principals may involve department chairpersons in this process, although this is not always the case. At the elementary school level, interviewing is ordinarily conducted by building administrators.

Principals vary widely in the emphasis they place on particular selection criteria. Some mentioned subject matter competence as being most critical; others said various pedagogical considerations were most important. In one way or another, however, all emphasized the "fit" of the person with the school's particular clientele. For example, one principal described her criteria as follows:

> I need someone who's been in urban education; knows how to deal with these kids; knows how to break the lesson apart so the kids understand it and can move with it. We have to do a lot of background, a lot of conceptual work with our kids. But that doesn't make them any the less a student. Our parents have certain kinds of limitations, but that doesn't mean they aren't caring. So part of it is working with parents. Being able to do instruction with parents; to help parents work with the kids. You have to be planned, to be organized. You have to have a high energy level. You can't be wishy-washy.

A rough division of labor is evidenced in this interviewing process. The personnel office is primarily concerned to ensure that candidates meet district and state requirements--for a racially heterogeneous faculty, capable of working in urban schools, and meeting certification standards. Other Central Office administrators seem to concern themselves primarily with the technical competence of candidates. Finally, school principals tend to assume that the applicants they interview have these attributes; they seek those special qualities that they believe are required for their particular schools.

Selection

Central Office administrators contend that principals have the power to make the final choice among job applicants. Where a vacancy has occurred and where the personnel office is able to send several applicants to the principal for interviewing, this contention is correct. But certain factors operate to constrain their ability to exercise this choice. We have already discussed one of the most important of these: Internal transfers are governed by seniority rules in the RTA's contract. Other factors are also at work.

First, an important point to note about the process described above is its relatively centralized nature. Principals become involved in the recruiting process only at its final stages, and then only if more than one candidate is available and judged suitable by district administrators. Typically, they interview just those persons who have passed at least one and often two levels of scrutiny in the Central Office. If good candidates are screened out at the Central Office, principals are unlikely to know it. Further, the Central Office decides which candidates will be interviewed at which schools. This relative lack of principal input was justified on the grounds that recruiting 200 or more teachers each year requires a level of coordination that only a substantial degree of centralization can provide. Two principals, however, were critical of this aspect of Rochester's recruiting program and claimed that many of their colleagues were as well.

An additional constraint results from the need to recruit on distant campuses. Tight budgets prevent bringing desirable candidates to the city for interviews. In these cases, selection is made on the basis of the interviews conducted by the recruiters and on the strength of credential files. These files are reviewed by persons in the Central Office, but they are not routinely sent to building administrators. They are available upon request, however.

Further, if an out-of-town candidate looks particularly desirable, or if he or she is certified in an area of shortage, a contract may be offered before a known vacancy opens up. Competition for these persons may be keen, and the applicants may be lost if there is a delay. In effect, the district gambles on a position being available in September. Since no position is available when a contract is offered, however, there is no particular principal directly concerned with the potential recruit. In effect, then, some new teachers arrive in Rochester in September, contract in hand, who must be assigned to a school.

Finally, timing presents a constraint. Because the internal transfer process is not completed until the end of August, firm knowledge of vacancies in particular schools is not available until late summer. Final hirings are made during the summer months. However, many principals are away from their offices during this period and unavailable for interviewing. Some make it a point to return to conduct an interview; others rely on the judgment of district-level administrators.

When final recommendations are complete, the personnel office prepares the necessary paperwork to offer a contract. It is at this point that the Personnel Committee of the Board of Education becomes involved. This committee receives an abbreviated credential file (including the writing sample) and scrutinizes their potential employees. This scrutiny is not entirely pro forma. One board member described the qualities this committee seeks:

> An openness--an openness to parent concerns. The understanding that a parent--be it a minority parent or a middle class white parent--that parent has been the first educator of the child. From day one. Give some credence to parents. . . . Recently the push has been excellence, academic excellence. The board has been selective. It wants academically-qualified people. As one of our goals, every time a teacher is hired the grade point average is given to us. We tell them [the administration] that we don't want to consider someone that doesn't have a B or B+ average. We don't want to consider anyone that's being hired as a social studies teacher that has less than so many hours of social studies. The impositions from the board on the Personnel Department have been mostly academic. We look at the writing sample, too.

This woman, who described herself as a parent activist, spends considerable time in "her" schools. It seems likely that her concerns, especially for parent-teacher interaction, are, in part, a consequence of her contacts with her "constituency." These concerns are communicated directly to the administrators responsible for hiring teachers.

Recruiting Substitutes

Rochester gets many of its new teachers through the process described above. However, a larger percentage of the district's contract staff are recruited from among the ranks of its substitute teachers. Indeed, for some positions, e.g., in the elementary grades, most permanent staff hired in the last six or eight years have gotten their jobs by first serving as substitute teachers.

At the height of the teacher glut, relatively few positions opened in the district, and there were a number of applicants for each one. During this period, the district continued to screen and interview applicants. Those who were thought to be suitable were told that although there were no jobs available, they should put their names on the substitute teacher list--that this was one of the best ways to eventually get a teaching job in Rochester. As a consequence of this policy, the district built up a large pool of qualified substitute teachers, who were waiting in the wings for a regular position. Reflecting on these times, one administrator said:

> Everybody that got interviewed was interviewed as a potential substitute. Part of our selling process was that the best way to get a full-time job was to be a good substitute. . . . [I told them] Subbing is a tough job, but people who really want to get a full-time position will hang in there. . . . You have to sell yourself when you're going to a school to substitute. You shouldn't just walk in there and sign in and substitute and walk out. Meet the principal; meet the Department Chairman; talk to people and tell them that you're interested in a full-time job. Give them your name and telephone number and tell them you're available. Do a little "P.R."

As a result of this active recruiting, an informal career ladder has developed in Rochester for substitute teachers. The first rung of this ladder has been service as a per diem substitute, on call to fill whatever vacancy exists on a particular day. Many of the current staff served years as per diem substitutes. If an individual worked out well in this role, they were "promoted" to the second rung of the career ladder, that of contract substitute. These individuals are hired to teach a particular classroom for a specified length of time, often filling in for teachers on maternity leave. Discussing the distinction between her current role as a "contract" and her previous one as a "per diem," one person spoke of the psychic benefits of the change:

> Now when I get up in the morning I know where I'll be spending the day. It's the first time that I've gotten to teach my own lessons to my own class, not somebody else's. I feel like a teacher now.

Further, contract subs receive the same salary and benefits given to the regular staff. Hence, contract positions are desired by per diem subs who view them as a "step up." Most important, contract subs are evaluated using the same procedures as those used for regular probationary teachers. This practice has given them the opportunity to demonstrate their competence to principals. When a permanent position opens in the building, the quality of their work is known.

From the district's perspective, substitutes have provided a nearly ideal recruiting pool. They are familiar with the district, its policies, and its pupils. Further, experienced subs have been evaluated by a number of different administrators. It is plausible to suppose that this has provided a more reliable method of teacher evaluation than the procedures used for the district's regular probationary staff, where only one or possibly two supervisors might observe and evaluate a person's classroom performance over a three-year period. Subbing also provided an excellent form of teacher training. One respondent claimed that subbing had taught her more than she had ever learned in college or as a practice teacher. Finally, subbing has provided a stringent test of an applicant's commitment. As one of this year's "new" teachers put it (a person who had subbed for seven years before getting a regular appointment): "It was hell. It's the worst job in the world. You really have to want to teach to sub for that long."

Recruiting substitutes has an important advantage from a principal's perspective as well. As noted above, Rochester's principals have had relatively little control over who teaches in their schools. Recruiting from among substitutes has developed into a primary means by which building administrators have gained control over the nature of their staffs. In effect, the district's substitute list has become an applicant pool parallel to the one created by the personnel office from campus visits.

One principal described this as "wriggling" to increase his latitude in hiring. When a vacancy occurred in his building, he not only notified the personnel office of the impending opening but also requested that a particular substitute be hired to fill it. Simultaneously, he contacted the sub and encouraged him to apply for the position. "Wriggling" is standard practice among school administrators, and it occasionally leads to considerable competition for a particular substitute. It is encouraged by the personnel office, which actively seeks principals' recommendations regarding subs. The extent of this practice can be seen from the remark of another principal who noted that, as a result of an unusual set of circumstances, she had had 10 vacancies to fill last year. Eight of the 10 persons hired had previously taught for her as subs. Wriggling, however, is about to come to an end. As we shall see, changing circumstances have severely curtailed the ability of principals to recruit from the ranks of substitutes.

Finding "Good Teachers"

The intent of the procedures described above is to find good teachers for Rochester's schools. But what counts as a "good teacher?" A notable feature of Rochester's recruiting system is the general agreement among the various actors regarding the important qualities to be sought in new staff. Board members, the superintendent, personnel administrators, and principals all stressed, in one way or another, that the capacity to teach in a multicultural, ethnically diverse setting was a critically important quality to be sought in a recruit. This overarching criterion was interpreted in somewhat different ways by various persons concerned with hiring, but the underlying theme remained the same: A good teacher for Rochester was one who enjoyed working with children of various backgrounds and one who would strive to ensure that all children achieved. The board member quoted earlier, with her emphasis on "openness to parents," illustrates one variation on this theme.

In different words, the superintendent made the same point. When asked what sort of qualities he sought in new teachers, he first dismissed "paper qualifications," knowledge of teaching strategies, and interest in working with young people. It was not that these qualities were unimportant. Rather, candidates were assumed to possess them. He described the critical criterion as follows:

> [We're] looking for quality human beings. . . . We have a wide range of students--approximately 12 percent Puerto Ricans, 50 percent black, and all different types of economic classes. We want people who are desirous of associating with this kind of range. Not just teachers, everyone--administrative staff, teaching staff, senior service staff. There's a big effort going on to get people like this. . . . People who can relate to a wide range of ethnic groups and socioeconomic groups.

A member of the personnel office staff described what he looks for when interviewing on campuses:

> We need to find the type of personality, the type of background that works well in the city. Some people can come from very rural areas, but you can see that, even though they have no urban experience, they'll learn quickly and they're the type of person that [our] students will like.

The principals quoted above made much the same point. The capacity to work with an ethnically diverse student and parent population is also reflected in the rating forms that the personnel office uses to evaluate job applicants.

Obviously, other qualities are also sought: Respondents mentioned such standard attributes as intellectual competence, subject matter knowledge, classroom management skills, and liking for children. For many of those interviewed, however, these qualities seemed to be subordinate to an important (if subjectively assessed) capacity to teach in an urban environment.

OTHER PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Teacher Evaluation

Evaluating the performance of teachers is the responsibility of building administrators. In the elementary schools, this responsibility may be shared with an assistant principal; in the high schools, department chairmen are typically involved. In the latter case, particularly if a teacher is judged to be having difficulty, subject area directors from the Central Office may be called in to assist.

Evaluations of probationary teachers are carried out four times each year, and once for tenured faculty. Concerning the former, three of these evaluations are formal classroom observations. Observations are cast as interpretive narratives. That is, the observer records and interprets whatever events he or she deems significant. No category rating systems are used other than a summary rating of "superior," "above average," etc., at the bottom of the form.

The fourth evaluation may involve an observation if the administrator believes it appropriate, but this is uncommon. This last assessment is intended to provide a summary rating of the teacher's performance and touches on topics not typically noted in classroom observations, e.g., relationships with coworkers and attendance. The form used requires that a teacher be rated on 19 scales grouped under four headings: instructional competencies, learning environment, professional matters, and personal characteristics and qualities. Principals are provided with a list of the kinds of skills and attributes to be considered under each of the 19 scales. Each major heading also receives a summary rating and a mandatory comment, as does the teacher's overall performance for the year. Building administrators receive some training in the use of these forms, though emphases vary according to principals' judgments of the special competencies required for successful teaching in their own schools.

A conference is held with the teacher following each evaluation. At this conference, strengths and weaknesses are discussed and recommendations for improvement are made. Teachers must sign the form, indicate their agreement or disagreement with the evaluation, and may attach a letter in explanation or rebuttal to the file copy.

Staff Development

The school district operates a rather extensive staff development program for teachers. In part, these activities are a result of Central Office plans, and in part they result from the initiatives of individual principals attempting to improve the performance of their own faculties.

The district also operates an unusual staff development program to identify and develop leadership potential among its teachers. The Management Institute, a cooperative venture with the State University College at Brockport and the University of Rochester, has been designed to train teachers identified as possessing leadership potential. Emphasis is placed on increasing the promotional opportunities of women and minorities. (The fact that 25 percent of the district's administrative staff is minority, as against 19 percent of its teaching staff, suggests the success of the program in this regard.) Institute courses are staffed jointly by college faculty and district administrators and are offered in the evenings at locations within the district. Internships are arranged for students so that they may work with successful practitioners. The program permits teachers to gain state certification as school or district administrators and enables the school system to shape the training program to suit its own particular needs. Since principals are recruited almost entirely from among the ranks of current teachers, this mechanism is intended to ensure that Rochester has candidates available as vacancies occur. This is seen as particularly important because of the imminent retirement of a large number of the district's current administrative staff.

AN ASSESSMENT

Above we examined some of the factors that have shaped Rochester's recruiting policies and practices. We then turned our attention to the actual procedures that the district uses to secure new teachers. In this section of the case study, we will offer an assessment of the system Rochester has developed for staffing its schools. We first consider some of the benefits and costs associated with the centralization of the district's recruiting system. Next, we discuss some of the specific techniques it has developed.

At several places in the preceding pages, Rochester's recruiting procedures were described as "centralized" or "bureaucratic." Much that is right with teacher recruiting in the district is traceable to precisely those qualities. As with most virtues, however, these also create problems.

First, it should be noted that centralized control is characteristic of most administrative functions in the district, not just recruiting. Respondents at all levels of the hierarchy from the superintendent down described the district using that term. Nor is this centralization of recent origin. Recruiting procedures have evolved over a long period of time and have changed only marginally in recent years. Current administrators do not recall when these procedures were instituted.

Centralized recruiting has some obvious advantages when 200 or more new teachers must be hired each year. It produces the efficiencies attendant on specialization and the division of labor. It makes effective coordination more likely. Several of the principals interviewed commented favorably on the fact that they did not have to worry about certification, salary negotiations, and checking references or transcripts; the personnel office took care of such matters. When (and if) they interviewed a candidate, they were sure that he or she met state and district standards and they could concentrate their attention on the candidate's "fit" with their particular school.

It is also likely that some of Rochester's centralization is made necessary by the district's unionization. Although the RTA has shown little interest in becoming involved in teacher selection, its concern to systematize the staff assignment process on the basis of seniority has had a very direct impact on the recruiting process. It is difficult to envision how the complex contract provisions for handling internal transfers could be effectively administered except by the Central Office and hence how recruitment could be substantially decentralized.

Finally, perhaps the greatest advantage to the centralized and bureaucratic mode of organization of the district is the degree of control it provides to the Board of Education. Coupled to a politically active and sensitive board, the district's governance structure is a relatively powerful tool for addressing citywide educational problems. As noted above, racial balance, student achievement, discipline, and dropping out are just some of the problems that Rochester faces. Although these are hardly resolved, there is evidence that the district has made substantial progress toward their solution. Much of this progress seems to be the result of the district's "3-Year Plan." Some, however, may be the result of having selected the appropriate teachers for the district's schools.

Concerning teacher selection, the high degree of consensus throughout the hierarchy regarding selection criteria has been noted. Virtually everyone, from board members to newly hired teachers, agreed that the capacity to work with children of various races, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic classes was critically important to successfully teaching in Rochester. This criterion was important to the board's Personnel Committee; it was central to the superintendent's definition of a good teacher; it was the quality most often mentioned by the district's personnel administrators; and it shaped their interviews of candidates. The possibility of creating such a consensus is heightened by the district's centralized governance structure.

It is impossible to know whether this image of the right teacher for Rochester's pupils has been realized in practice. We cannot objectively assess the degree to which the system has succeeded in finding, in the superintendent's words, "people who can relate to a wide range of ethnic groups and socioeconomic groups." Certainly, however, the near consensus among those involved with recruiting new staff makes its realization more likely. Further, the emphasis on this criterion in all candidate interviews and in the district's recruiting literature makes its realization more probable. Those involved in the recruiting process clearly believe that they can successfully identify persons capable of relating to pupils and parents of diverse backgrounds.

If centralized teacher recruitment is an important tool for solving districtwide educational problems, it is also fair to say that it was devised in a period of time when the system faced a buyer's market. That time seems to be drawing to a close. Large-scale retirements, the state's mandates, an upturn in births, inter alia, all seem to point to an imminent teacher shortage. A scarcity of some specialties is already evident and seems destined to spread to other certification areas. Thus, it is important to ask whether procedures suitable to a time of surplus are also suitable to these changing circumstances.

If other districts face an impending shortage of recruits, in Rochester that shortage is already a reality. Earlier we described the advantages accruing to the district from hiring its substitute teachers. It allows school principals to control who teaches in their schools, it presents an opportunity to carefully assess a potential teacher's skills over a protracted period of time and with particular types of students, and it lessens the consequences of any recruiting errors made by the Central Office. All of these benefits are disappearing.

Substitute teachers are now in critically short supply in Rochester. Every administrator and most teachers mentioned this problem, some calling it a matter of crisis proportions. The reasons for the shortage are unclear. In part, it is of the district's own making. The practice of hiring substitutes for regular positions has depleted the list of good candidates. Other reasons include the improving economy, which has provided alternative employment opportunities for substitutes; the decreasing number of graduates from teacher training institutions; and the increasing number of vacancies in all districts. Whatever the reasons, many building administrators now find themselves "keeping school" when their teachers are out.

Further, the RTA's successful effort to unionize substitute teachers will almost surely affect recruitment. To this point, the union has been primarily interested in improving subs' pay and benefits; the current contract was described by the RTA's president as a "skeleton" on which the association intended to build. As part of the building process, he indicated that in the near future the union would give its attention to regularizing and making more equitable the process by which substitutes are brought into the system as teachers. What changes are to be considered is unclear, though the obvious candidate is some form of seniority rule. Thus, performance of subs will be less important in selection. Whatever the mechanism, any efforts along these lines must necessarily restrict further the autonomy of principals.

The point, then, is that the effects of centralized recruiting, with its attendant erosion of principal autonomy, were softened by the system of recruiting subs. To a considerable extent, the personnel office was actually engaged in creating a pool of substitutes from which principals might pick those they found most suitable to their own schools. Thus, although centralized recruiting seemed to deny principals control over staff selection, it actually increased their control. With the disappearance of the district's own "reserve army of the unemployed," an important buffer between principals and the Central Office's hiring decisions will be lost.

This loss of principal control is likely to be exacerbated by another aspect of the district's centralized recruiting. It was noted above that the only job description available to recruiters is a highly abstract and generalized one describing desirable teachers of every level and subject. For example, it requires that teachers be able to "plan a program that, as much as possible, meets the individual needs, interests, and abilities of students." This is surely an estimable equality. But job descriptions couched in such terms provide little in the way of concrete guidance to recruiters.

Good personnel practice has it that job descriptions should be as specific as possible to the vacant position. They should describe the actual responsibilities, relationships, and qualifications needed to competently fill an opening. In this way, those responsible for recruiting can actively seek specific kinds of information about a candidate and arrive at reasonable judgments about his or her chances for success.

In a competitive market, this more specific approach seems warranted. This will be especially the case as Rochester's recruiters are inevitably driven farther and farther from the city in search of good applicants and as a higher proportion of the district's new teachers come from such efforts. In these circumstances, hiring decisions made in Rochester must necessarily be based on impressions gleaned in interviews at distant sites and from credential folders submitted by relatively unknown applicants. Under those conditions, the more pertinent the interview and the more relevant the documentation to a particular opening, the more likely are hiring decisions to be good ones.

Perhaps principals with vacancies in their schools could prepare specific job descriptions, accompany recruiters, participate in the interviewing process, and seek whatever documentation (in addition to the standard transcript, recommendations, and writing sample) they desire. Of course, adhering to specific job descriptions in the recruiting process strengthens bureaucratic control. However, the suggestion also lessens the current degree of centralization of recruiting by involving building administrators.

A dilemma created by the need for centralized control is evidenced in the district's transfer policy, as that policy is formalized in the RTA's contract. As noted above, when vacancies occur within the district, current staff have an opportunity to transfer to them. In general, such transfers are granted on the basis of seniority. It is in the district's interests to encourage transfers: Both principals and teachers commented on the importance of permitting staff to move. Here is one respondent discussing her own and her colleagues' transfers:

> I had requested a transfer from my other building not because I was unhappy there. . . . But I felt that I had gone as far as I could go. I needed a challenge; I needed something different. . . . They [teachers who transferred] are happy with the change. They're talking about their professional growth and the difference it has made to them.

Encouraging transfers is not entirely consonant with permitting principals some control over who will teach in their schools. This is especially the case when approval of a transfer request becomes virtually mandatory. With a shrinking sub list, with firm knowledge about vacancies unavailable until very late in the spring, and with a teacher shortage causing recruiters to seek candidates farther afield and over a longer period of time, a larger proportion of vacant positions will likely be unfilled at that date. As a consequence, it seems likely that an increasing number of vacancies will be governed by the transfer clause of the contract. There is already evidence that this is happening.

The seniority criterion has important positive attributes. It recognizes that experienced teachers are more likely to need to move for reasons of professional development, it rewards long and faithful service, and it has the virtue of ease of administration. However, it does rest on an implausible assumption: that the most senior teacher in the district who desires a transfer is suited to fill every vacancy that exists in his or her area of certification, that the next most senior is suited to fill every vacancy but one, etc.

This assumption is especially troublesome for principals in "good" schools. One of these commented:

> I didn't have a choice [about my new staff]. In the building I came from, everybody wanted in. It was a fairly small school, and we had pretty much zero turnover. I never had a chance of building [the staff] I wanted, because, when an opening occurred, somebody was bound to snap it up.

Rochester is not alone in granting transfers according to length of service. The practice appears to be common. When few teachers were retiring, any loss of principal autonomy was perhaps negligible. But in a period of frequent retirements and teacher scarcity, balancing the bureaucratic virtues of career orientation and coordination, as exemplified in the seniority rule, against the requirement for a reasonable degree of principal autonomy, may become increasingly difficult.

There is a final aspect of Rochester's recruitment system which, in a time of scarcity, may become problematic. This concerns the articulation of the district's recruiting efforts and its teacher evaluation program. More precisely, it concerns the lack of articulation.

Final responsibility for teacher evaluation rests with the school principal. Responsibility for recruitment rests with the Central Office. Ideally, these two functions should be closely connected. As it stands, however, it is possible for the personnel office to seek persons with one set of qualities and for those same persons to be evaluated on a quite different set after they have begun to teach. Alternatively, it is possible for a desirable candidate (from a principal's perspective) to be screened out at the Central Office and hence never be a potential choice.

It is easy to gloss over this issue--for people to think they are in agreement about a criterion when they are not. When recruiters are working from a very general notion of what sort of a person is required, e.g., someone who "employs instructional methods and materials that are most appropriate for meeting stated objectives" (see item 4 in Appendix A of this case study), it is difficult to disagree with the criterion. The problem is that it is so lacking in specificity as to be useless. To oppose its use is on the order of opposing mom and apple pie. This is exacerbated when the criterion is "capacity for urban teaching," which, as noted above, played a significant role in initial interviews. That criterion is important in Rochester, but what exactly does it mean? Most of Rochester's principals would agree that recruiters should search for persons exhibiting this quality, but one suspects that there would be considerable disagreement over whether or not any particular candidate exhibited it.

CONCLUSION

There is a great deal that is right with the City School District of Rochester. The district seems to have been able to strike a balance between the often conflicting demands for academic quality and equality. The diversity of new programs available in the district is remarkable. Although there is no way to attribute the recent upturn in academic achievement to these programs, it is plausible to suppose that they have played a part. Certainly, the district's recruitment efforts, aimed at finding competent, academically qualified teachers who are willing and able to work with an ethnically and academically diverse student body, are likely to have contributed to this outcome.

Some of its recruitment strategies might be usefully adopted by other districts. Attempting to coordinate teacher recruiting with the recruiting efforts of local industries deserves consideration. Continuing to recruit actively, even in those areas where a teacher surplus exists, thereby maintaining as large an applicant pool as possible, is another good idea. Using an easily collected writing sample to assess both writing and teaching competence may be of value. The informal division of labor and specialization that has grown up around the interviewing process may be worth consideration. Recruiting substitutes is an excellent adaptation to conditions of surplus and may still prove useful in some areas.

The immediate future promises to be a difficult period for the district. Its struggles to maintain racially balanced schools taught by a similarly balanced and committed faculty, to continue successful efforts to improve the academic achievement of students, and to recruit a large number of competent teachers in an increasingly competitive market will be formidable. Moreover, all of these tasks must be carried out in a context dominated by a high degree of centralization, a politically active Board of Education, a strong teachers' union, tight budgets, and a powerful active State Board of Regents. To a substantial degree, Rochester's success will depend upon its ability to capitalize on the virtues of its bureaucracy while adapting those virtues to changing conditions.

Appendix A

CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT--ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Teacher

BRACKET: I, II
DATE: 1979

REPORTS TO: Principal

JOB GOAL: To help students learn subject matter and/or skills that will contribute to their development as mature, able, and responsible men and women.

PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Plans a program that, as much as possible, meets the individual needs, interests, and abilities of students.
2. Creates an environment that is conducive to learning and appropriate to the maturity and interests of students.
3. Guides the learning process toward the achievement of curriculum goals and--in harmony with the goals--establishes clear objectives for all lessons, units, projects, and the like to communicate these objectives to students.
4. Employs instructional methods and materials that are most appropriate for meeting stated objectives.
5. Evaluates the accomplishments of students on a regular basis and provides progress reports as required.
6. Diagnoses the learning abilities and disabilities of students on a regular basis, seeking the assistance of District specialists as required.
7. Counsels with colleagues, students, and parents on a regular basis and works cooperatively with staff, superiors, and community.
8. Assists the administration in implementing all policies and/or rules governing student life and conduct, and develops reasonable rules of behavior and procedure, and maintains order in a fair and just manner.
9. Strives to maintain and improve professional competence.
10. Attends meetings and serves on staff committees as appropriate.

EVALUATION: Performance of this job will be evaluated annually in accordance with provisions of the Board's policy on Evaluation of Professional Personnel.

QUALIFICATIONS: Bachelor's degree for provisional certification and appropriate additional graduate work for permanent certification.

New York State Teaching Certificate in subject area.

The City School District is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or age in its hiring and promotional procedures. Both men and women are encouraged to apply for any vacancy for which they believe they qualify.

Appendix B

ROCHESTER CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Teacher Personnel Interview Form

Name______________________________Date______________

Address________________________City Residence Yes___ No_____

Phone__________________________Interviewer______________

Teaching Field (Subject and/or Grades)__________Preference__________

1. TRAINING

Major__________________ Bachelor's Degree____________________

Minor__________________ Master's Degree______________________

Other______________________________

Expository Writing Courses__________________________________

	Superior	Average	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Overall Quality of Training				
2. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS				
Appearance				
Oral Communication Skills				
Poise (Self-Control)				
Flexibility				
Enthusiasm for Teaching				
3. TEACHING EXPERIENCE				
Student Teaching Evaluation				
Teaching References				
4. POTENTIAL FOR URBAN TEACHING				
Attitude				
Experience				
Training				

5. SUBJECT MATTER COMPETENCY ______________________________

6. EVALUATION OF WRITTEN
MATERIAL ______________________________

GENERAL REMARKS:

Recommended YES_____ NO_____

Case Study 6

TEACHER SELECTION IN THE DURHAM COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Phillip C. Schlechty
George W. Noblit

INTRODUCTION

In January 1980, the Durham County School System in North Carolina undertook a major study of the system's existing personnel practices. The purpose of the study was to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive restructuring of the total personnel management system then operating in the school system. The basic design of the new system was completed by January 1983, with preliminary implementation during 1983-84. However, it was not until the 1984-85 school year that systematic implementation actually occurred.[1]

In this Note, we initially intended to focus on the recruitment and selection procedures that were developed as a result of this change effort. As the case was analyzed, however, it became clear that other aspects of the personnel management system, such as socialization and career-long training, would also need considerable attention. As planning progressed on the personnel management system, recruitment and selection became relatively insignificant parts of a complex, systematic plan holding great potential for affecting experienced teachers and administrators as well as newly hired professional staff. Indeed, recruitment and selection procedures in Durham County take on significance only when viewed as functions around which experienced teachers and administrators can redefine their roles and develop new competencies.

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[1] We have not attempted to describe the pattern of recruitment and selection that existed before the effort to implement the comprehensive personnel development system. However, it is relatively easy to describe. Two conventions were followed: (a) The principals personally recruited applicants for vacancies and reported their decision to the personnel office. The primary role of the personnel office was to check to be sure credentials, references, and state required test scores were in order; and (b) the principal asked the personnel office to supply a list of eligible applicants from which persons to be interviewed could be selected. Subsequently, the principal made his recommendation to the central personnel office.

During the development of the system, conceptual emphasis was on recruitment and selection. However, as a result of the particular mechanisms Durham County educators developed to address personnel management, the original focus on the recruitment and selection of new teachers became a vehicle for training experienced teachers and administrators in selected research and theory on effective teaching. By using recruitment and selection as initial points of discussion and by involving experienced teachers and administrators in recruitment and selection processes, the program has led to (a) the creation of differentiated roles for selected teachers, (b) the identification of new competencies needed to fulfill these roles, and (c) staff development intended to support the enactment of these new roles.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

To understand the significance of events during the development of the program, a brief discussion of the demographics, history, and organizational features of the Durham County School System is needed.

The Policy Context

Geography and demography are important contextual variables to take into account when describing and analyzing recruitment and selection in the Durham County School System. The system is located in the Research Triangle Park area of North Carolina. The Research Triangle was established to attract high technology and research and development industries. It is located close to the state's three major research universities, Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University, as well as to other institutions of higher education.

The success of the Research Triangle in attracting the desired enterprises, coupled with the concentration of universities in the area, brings large numbers of highly educated men and women into the Durham County area. One consequence is that the Durham County School System can draw on a large pool of persons who desire employment in the local schools. Some of these persons seek employment because they view teaching as a career and find the Durham County schools desirable places to teach. Others view employment in the school system as a way to supplement income while they or their spouses pursue graduate studies or have temporary work assignments in the Research Triangle Park.

A second set of conditions help explain the policy context of the school system. Historically and traditionally, the school system has been decentralized, but during the 1960s and 1970s, external forces began pushing it toward centralization.

Before the 1960s, the Durham County School System served a predominantly rural population. Though the district was referred to as a system, it functioned much more like a loose confederation of schools, with each high school and feeder elementary and junior high serving a relatively well-defined community, whether it be white or black. Beginning in the 1960s and more dramatically during the early 1970s, desegregation, rapid population growth, and the influx of a well-educated, cosmopolitan population began to create pressures for the school district to behave "more like a system."

By the late 1960s, one of the major concerns of many principals had to do with the issue of centralization versus decentralization. As will be shown below, the recruitment and selection process that has recently evolved in Durham County can be seen as a mechanism for working out some of the problems associated with resolving the question: What should be centralized and what should not?

The Organizational Context

The Durham County School System is the fifth largest in North Carolina. There are 17,472 students, 1,026 professional employees, and 59 administrators. The district surrounds the Durham City Schools, a separate district that is approximately 90 percent minority. In contrast, 30 percent of students in the Durham County system are members of minority groups as are 22 percent of teachers and 18 percent of the administrators. Because of housing patterns, the school system is relatively desegregated. At the extremes, one school has 53 percent minority students and another school has 15 percent. To date, the school system has avoided busing as a means of approaching the goal of racial balance.

The schools in Durham County are rural and suburban, with 70 percent nonminority students. This creates a condition in which the county schools are perceived by many teachers and parents as preferred places to teach or to have their children attend school.

The school district, with 13 elementary, six middle/junior high, and three high schools, is headed by a superintendent appointed by an elected, five-person school board. The overall management of personnel is assigned to an assistant superintendent, although the day-to-day personnel functions are carried out by the coordinator of personnel. The personnel system to be described in this case study, however, was initiated by a special assistant to the superintendent who officially does not have other personnel responsibilities. Further, the study and planning committees that created the new system were composed primarily of principals. Indeed, the initial committee was entitled, "The Principal's Personnel Study Committee."

Two additional organizational facts are relevant to providing a context for interpreting events in Durham County. First, although the elected school board has the authority to establish policy for the system, fiscal authority resides with the county commissioners. The result, of course, is that school district policies and budgets have the character of being negotiated settlements. Further, the basic salary structure for all personnel is provided by the state. Although local resources are used to supplement the state's structure, basic decisions about salaries are more the province of state legislators than of the county commissioners or the local board of education.

A second fact is that the superintendent in office at the time this program was initiated recently accepted a position as superintendent in another state. There is no evidence of a connection between the initiation of the program reported on here and the superintendent's departure, but some principals question whether the initiative will be continued under the new superintendent. Thus, it remains to be seen whether the personnel management system described here is an approach being nurtured or one being abandoned.

Program Initiation

The initiative for this program was a memorandum to the superintendent from an elementary school principal. The text of the memo follows:

> I have worked in a variety of school settings over the past six years. In each of these settings, I have followed an administrator who has been dismissed or forced to resign as a result of severe organizational and/or personnel problems. One common factor in each of these settings has been organizational neglect. In each case, morale was low and the basic, day-to-day organizational functions were not being carried out. All of these jobs have required an effort to rebuild or build morale and provide some sense of direction through a set of organizational values which the employees could accept as legitimate. From these efforts and some recent tapes which I have been making with Dr. Phillip Schlechty, a professor in the education school at UNC-Chapel Hill, I believe I have a better feel for designing an organizational structure which might help us build a culture among researchers and administrators which could lead to the valuing and reinforcing of technical teaching skills. These notions are drawn from a variety of sources and are certainly not original with me. I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss these ideas with you and my colleagues at any time which is convenient. The kind of model that I am talking about would have major implications for a broad range of functions which are critical to shaping employees' attitudes and behaviors in every phase of the personnel process from hiring, observing, and training to dismissal of employees. If you feel that these ideas are of any interest to you or any of the principals in the school system, please let me know.

This memo had two effects. One, it identified a problem and indicated a direction the schools might take in developing solutions. Two, it identified a champion for the initiative who was later promoted to the position of special assistant to the superintendent. In this role, his primary responsibility was to design the system and effect a process through which it could be refined and "sold" to principals.

In the fall of 1980, the superintendent authorized the newly appointed special assistant to establish a committee of principals to conduct a comprehensive study of personnel functions in the district. The specific charge to the committee was to:

1. Examine the current recruitment criteria to determine in what ways they might be made more explicit and direct.
2. Consider the degree of selectivity that should be observed in hiring and how we can formalize this aspect of personnel selection.
3. Examine the attributes of professional status jobs and consider how we are either in or out of congruence with such professional recruitment and selection practices.
4. Determine what our standards for "quality practice" are and how visible such standards should be made.
5. Examine how new applicants will demonstrate such skills.
6. Consider the descriptive and analytical quality of the language used in making comparisons between applicants.
7. Consider how we develop and enforce our norms for performance.
8. Consider a staged admissions process to teaching in Durham County and how the tenuring process should be handled.
9. Develop a systematic training program for those who will observe and evaluate teachers.
10. Systematize the dismissal of tenured and nontenured personnel in Durham County.
11. Consider who should be involved at all stages of the procedures described above.

By December 1980, the committee had refined its scope and identified some guiding beliefs. The scope now included recruitment, selection, socialization, continuous training and observation, evaluation, counseling and dismissal of unsuccessful professional personnel, and attaining and maintaining career status. The guiding beliefs were:

1. The primary responsibility for the failure of students to learn at school must rest with the school. Although environmental factors are important, it is our belief that regardless of background, all students can, under the right conditions, make progress. Each student has the potential for learning the next

thing beyond that which he already knows. Providing the right conditions is the responsibility of the school system.

2. We believe that if it is possible to identify systematically the characteristics of schools and the behaviors of individuals, teachers, and students, this will enhance the probability that learning will take place.
3. The most effective means of improving the quality of public schools is to systematically upgrade and refine the skills of the school-based teacher and administrator. Such an emphasis should focus on initial entry skills, continuous training, and regular observation, as well as specific feedback and evaluation.
4. Whether we are dealing with independent or dependent skills, recognition of the incremental nature of learning is crucial. Although children build knowledge at vastly different speeds, it is impossible for a learner to achieve higher-order learning without also having achieved the subordinate learnings that support it.
5. Those individuals who are expected to implement and be accountable for a program should have a major voice in designing the specifics of that program. The Durham County system supports a decentralized approach to decisionmaking. The Central Office may set directions for the system (along with the schools), but whenever possible, decisionmaking should be kept as close to the source of implementation as possible.

By the fall of 1982, the Personnel Study Committee had translated these general beliefs regarding healthy school environments into specific statements. In a report submitted in September 1982, the committee stated:

> In Durham County our biases about the recruitment and selection of professional staff can be summarized as follows: The first and most important factor in improving the quality of services delivered by a public school system is the identification and selection of competent personnel. All too often school systems located in areas with an easily accessible source of new teachers and administrators tend to

develop a passive posture. The process usually involves little more than waiting to see who turns up at the door or relying on the personal recommendations of the fellow educators in the immediate area. Certainly, such recommendations are important, yet in an age of sophisticated communication networks, it is alarming that even many large school systems have no systematic effort directed toward securing the best possible applicants on a national or even a regional basis. We believe that such a network is essential to assuring that we will recruit the best candidates into the Durham County School System. To recruit candidates through such a network requires a clear statement of desired competencies which are shared systemwide in a common language. We must, therefore, state these recruitment criteria in explicit language emphasizing the technical norms of competence which are valued by the system. By technical norms of competence we mean the codification of best teaching practices and the development of a system which reinforces the value of such practices. Second, we must structure screening situations which allow us to determine if candidates for employment possess these competencies. This may mean observing candidates teach prior to signing them to contracts. Education is one of the few occupations where individuals are hired without having to demonstrate competencies to their employer. We believe that if we can identify those teachers within our school system who model norms of competence which we value, then we can effectively utilize these professionals in the recruitment and selection of new teachers and administrators. This process reinforces visible quality practice, further clarifies our language, and socializes candidates to the importance of teaching competence at the point of initial contact with Durham County. Third, we are convinced that those teachers who are involved in the recruitment and selection process must be identified and made visible as norm-setters through differentiated job responsibilities and significant reward differentiation. The identification of these norm-setters should grow out of demonstrated technical competence and leadership performance in functional work groups. Such persons should be identified and qualified in a manner that is consistent with their function. This would mean that merely being appointed by an administrator without a thorough screening based upon a specified criteria would be inconsistent with attempts to develop a professional model. Providing adequate incentives and reasonable time requirements so that these teachers remain teachers is critical to the intent of this effort. Fourth, it is equally critical that administrators be the leaders of these recruitment and selection teams. This placed the administrator in a role of setting the content of discussion about the recruitment criteria and structuring situations which allow the organization to utilize its experts in the recruitment and selection process. The principal must share a common language with his/her faculty and begin to discuss

> those aspects of teaching and performing in the work setting which are of the most critical value to the organization. As leaders who will set criteria and establish the content of work-group discussions, it should be expected that administrators will be more vigorously qualified than any member of the recruitment/selection team and will be knowledgeable professionals who can establish effective systems of recruitment and selection.

As can be seen by reviewing these statements, the committee, and certainly the special assistant, took the position that recruitment and selection should be integrated parts of an overall personnel management system that had implications not only for newly hired personnel but also for experienced educators.

From Beliefs to Practices: Emergence of Problems

By spring 1983, the superintendent, the special assistant to the superintendent, and most on the planning committee were becoming aware that the task they had undertaken was a difficult one. There were at least three sources of difficulty.

First, the comprehensive nature of the planning effort made the task almost overwhelming. Indeed, in 1982 and again in 1983, there was some sentiment on the committee that the effort should be abandoned. An internal memo from the special assistant which he later entitled "A Futile Memo Thrown at a Mutiny: The Committee Threatens to Jump Ship," is only one indicator of the frustration engendered by the complexity of their task. In this memo, the special assistant wrote:

> After our Monday meeting, Dr. Yeager's remarks from several meetings back seem to have a sound ring of wisdom to them. I quote, "You can't expect tackling such a big issue to be simple. If you don't feel at least a little bit of pain as you go through this process, then obviously you aren't taking it very seriously." If the faces in our meeting Monday were any indication, we're all taking this *very* seriously.

A second difficulty had to do with the tension between the quest for uniformity and the desire for building-level autonomy. Under the strong leadership and direction of the special assistant, the committee produced position papers that contain frequent references to the need for a common language, common standards, common expectations, and school-system-level accountability. Committee minutes also reflect that uniformity of expectations throughout the district was a desirable goal. Yet, the quest for uniformity and standardization was offset by the superintendent's insistence that the program should not require any effective principal to do what he/she was not now doing because he "did not want to take principals out of their strengths."

Third, the development and implementation of such a comprehensive change effort required a heavy "buy-in" from principals and teachers, yet some principals expressed concern that the intent was to undermine their authority. And, up through 1982, few faculty were cognizant of the nature of changes to be proposed. Even as late as the fall of 1984, principals and faculty alike reported that the major difficulty with implementation was misapprehension of faculty who openly expressed the concern that the real purpose of this program is to "slip in a merit pay program" or some undesirable form of differentiated staffing. In addition, the North Carolina Association of Educators, though just beginning to gather information on the program, reported some complaints from teachers. In particular, the NCAE has concerns about inconsistencies among the schools, the role of participating teachers, and what they view as "a level of arbitrariness" in the selection of participating teachers.

The way in which some of these problems were addressed and resolved gives shape and form to the present procedures employed in recruitment and selection in the Durham County schools.

Volunteerism and Local Planning

During the 1983-84 school year, eight schools established faculty committees to review and react to the recommendations (now viewed as general guidelines) from the committee, by then referred to as the central steering committee. Although these schools were initially called "pilot schools" they were, in fact, study sites.

More specifically, these school faculties were not expected to do anything differently. Rather, they were to study what the committee had recommended and to develop plans to adapt these recommendations to their particular situation. Money was provided ($10,000-$20,000) to each of these schools for support of training and released time and to pay "core staff" for additional duties and summer employment. By the spring of 1984, the guidelines had been sufficiently refined that 18 schools were involved. One of the conditions for involvement for 1984-85 was that a school submit a proposal giving detailed responses to a series of questions related to recruitment and selection, socialization, dimensions and indicators of effective teaching, observation and evaluation, continuous training, and achieving and maintaining career status. With regard to recruitment and selection, the questions were:

1. How will teachers be involved in the recruitment of professional employees at your school?
2. How will teachers be involved in the selection of the professional employees at your school?
3. How will the professional expectations of the school be transmitted to candidates during the recruitment and selection process?
4. Describe the selection criteria and the process to be used.
5. How will you determine the competencies of your selection team?
6. How will the recruitment and selection system of the school be transmitted to the entire faculty so that the process serves to foster professional values and behavior?
7. How do you see work groups from which the recruitment and selection team members were selected being involved in these processes?

In answering these questions, each school planning committee was under instructions to review the recommendations of the central steering committee. They were informed that they could deviate from these recommendations if local conditions indicated they should do so, but the proposed program must be consistent with the "guiding beliefs" stipulated by the central committee. With regard to recruitment and selection, the critical beliefs were:

1. Recruitment should be an active process, involving systematic networking with a wide range of potential sources of new employees. The central committee identified specific institutions that it recommended be included in this network and it was to be the responsibility of the Central Office to ensure that such networking occurred. Networks were established and made available to local school units.
2. Selection should be based on explicit criteria and clear statements of job expectations. For in the central committee's view, the process of selection was also part of the initial socialization of new teachers.
3. The functional work group (by which is meant "a group of teachers with common instructional responsibilities and professional functions") should be conceived as the primary social unit in the school and the interest and values of the functional work group should be represented in the selection process.
4. Decisions regarding who should be employed should be made primarily at the building level with heavy input from qualified teachers. Furthermore, those teachers who are involved in selection should be involved in ongoing support and observation of the new teachers.
5. The core staffs of each school were to be selected on the basis of their reputations for quality instruction and were to receive specialized training to qualify them especially for the selection and observation functions.

Each school was invited to apply for grants of between $20,000 and $30,000 and to submit proposals that responded to the questions posed by the committee. The proposals were reviewed, critiqued, and finally recommended for funding by an external panel of university professors. The criteria suggested centralization; however, these criteria were not so stringent that local schools could not vary in their plans for recruitment and selection. Three cases will reveal how recruitment and selection varied.

SCHOOL A

School A, an elementary school, had 25 teachers and 660 students in grades K-5. In the late spring and summer of 1984, School A instituted its new recruitment and selection process. A total of five vacancies were to be filled. When notified of a vacancy (four came in May), the principal decided on some internal shifts and then informed the personnel office of the positions to be advertised. The principal also posted the vacancies in the building. The principal reviewed the applications of all candidates, summarized the nonconfidential information for the selection committee, and scheduled the candidates for interviews with the selection committee, which was composed of the work group leaders (one from each grade level and the principal). Before the group interview, the principal conducted a 15-minute interview with the candidate in which information about the school, school procedures, and expectations was shared.

The selection committee had a common interview guide that elicited information about the candidate's background, preparation, professional knowledge, and attitudes, and about how the candidate would respond in specific situations. Members of the selection committee said that aside from technical competence, they were looking for people who were enthusiastic, cooperative, able to handle diversity, interested in continuing their professional education, and familiar with the district's reading program.

Following the interviews, the selection committee voted on who they wished to hire. The principal accepted their recommendations and notified the candidates. The selection committee and principal noted that in the future they would rank their candidates, since two of their first choices did not accept the positions. However, with some shuffling of job descriptions, the principal and the selection committee were able to hire persons that they considered to be qualified applicants who now seem to be successfully performing in the classroom.

Each new teacher received a day and a half of inservice at the district offices and one day of orientation at the school. The school plans to begin having teachers observe new teachers in the spring of 1985 as part of their ongoing efforts at socialization of staff. The work group leader from the appropriate grade level has been assigned to provide support for and fellowship with the new teachers.

SCHOOL B

School B is a junior high school with 63 teachers and 930 students. Last year, the school had nine vacancies. Because of the departmental structure of the school, the principal is less able to reassign staff internally before advertising a vacancy than was the principal of School A. When notified of a vacancy, the principal informed the Central Office (which advertised the positions) and posted the positions on the school bulletin boards. Central Office personnel sent the principal the applications and in those cases of more than five candidates for a single position, the principal conducted a screening interview to narrow the list to five. The principal then scheduled interviews of the five candidates for each position with an appropriate selection committee composed of three department chairs (including the department with the vacancy), the principal, and a faculty member from that department with a reputation for excellence in teaching. The principal reviewed the personnel file and summarized the nonconfidential information for the selection teams. After the five were interviewed by the teams using a common interview guide, the selection team discussed the applicants and tried to achieve consensus. Aside from technical competence, the teams asked for someone whose beliefs were consistent with the school's goals and rules, and who would be involved in school activities and able to adjust to student diversity. The team ranked the top candidates in case their first choice did not accept the position. Finally, the principal contacted the candidates who were the consensus choices and informed them of the team's decision. The principal reported that since he participated in the consensus, all recommended candidates were offered a position.

The new teachers received a day and a half inservice from the district and then a one-day orientation at the school. Each new teacher was paired with a "buddy" after the orientation. The "buddy" is responsible for peer coaching the candidate during the year. During the year every teacher involved in the program is expected to observe another teacher twice and be observed twice for formative feedback. Summative evaluation is still the legal responsibility of the principal.

SCHOOL C

School C is a high school with 60 teachers and 820 students. Last year, the school filled five vacancies in the teaching staff. Like School B, the principal of School C notified the Central Office of a vacancy, which advertised it locally and then posted the vacancy within the school. The principal reviewed and summarized the nonconfidential data in the personnel files for the selection committees and conducted screening interviews with candidates to determine which five or six candidates "stood out." The selection committees were composed of three department chairs from the departments with the highest turnover (English, science, and math) and another department chair with relevant expertise. The principal maintained a file of potential candidates that the department chair also reviewed; the chair could also ask the principal to contact some of them. The selection committee reviewed the principal's screening and the resultant pools of candidates and submitted a list of those to be interviewed to the principal. The principal contacted these and scheduled interviews. The principal conducted a 15-minute interview/discussion with each candidate, and the selection committee (without the principal) interviewed each candidate using specified questions. Aside from technical competence, School C sought candidates with respect for people ("students, parents *and* fellow staff"), those with an ability to combine composition with academic quality, and those who could identify with the "blue collar" student population School C serves.

The selection committee made recommendations to the principal as to who should be hired and rank-ordered top candidates. The principal then contacted the top choices and effected the hiring. The principal reports taking all the recommendations of the selection committees and expects to continue to do so.

The new teachers received a day and a half inservice at the district office and a day of orientation at the building designed by the core staff composed of department chairs. There is not a formal buddy system, but the department chairs report that they have an investment in these hirees and have "looked after them."

MANIFEST AND LATENT EFFECTS

The intended purposes of personnel recruitment and selection procedures developed by the Durham County schools can be summarized as follows:

1. To increase the proactive posture of the school system as it relates to potential applicants and consequently to broaden the applicant pool from which new employees could be selected.
2. To design a selection process in such a way that it would function as an induction subsystem for the comprehensive personnel development system.
3. To actively involve senior teachers in the selection process with an eye toward increasing the stake that senior teachers have in the success of new employees and enhancing the likelihood that beginning teachers would use experienced teachers as exemplars and role models.

In assessing whether these intended outcomes are being or have been realized, several caveats are in order.

First, the present system of personnel recruitment and selection has only recently been installed. During the 1983-84 school year, some school units made some relatively unsystematic attempts at installing new selection procedures, but it was not until the 1984-85 school year that building units became systematic in their efforts. Further, at the time this case study was conducted, 18 schools out of 22 total were involved in a systematic effort to revise personnel recruitment and selection processes. Thus, there is a prima facie evidence that whatever selection and recruitment process has emerged from the comprehensive system, its effects are not evenly distributed throughout the system.

Second, given the limited duration of the present implementation effort, it is not clear how substantial the intended effects are or how long lasting they will be. Indeed, the recent departure of the initiating superintendent has led some local personnel to be skeptical about the continuation of the effort at comprehensive reform in the personnel area.

Third, given the fact that the only observable difference between the new system and the old is that senior teachers now play a more systematic role in the selection process, one could justifiably ask "What is so different or special about the Durham County case? Many districts have had teacher involvement in the selection process for some time."

After conducting this case study, we came away convinced that the Durham County story is important, but its importance does not reside in any special insights that can be gained about recruitment and selection. What is important, we believe, is that the school system has used attention on recruitment and selection as a vehicle to encourage local school units to systematically address some crucial issues vital to the life of any school and district, e.g., What are the goals of the school? What does the faculty expect of themselves and new employees? How can the faculty give and receive important feedback? Perhaps even more important, at least in the participating schools, is a clear sense that recruitment and selection (especially selection) are integral and important parts of the social life of the school. So important are they, in fact, that special training, special resources, and special time should be set aside for these tasks.

With these caveats in mind, we will discuss the evidence concerning the degree to which the new system is achieving the intended effects. In the three schools where detailed case studies were conducted, 19 teachers were selected. Of these, 11 had had previous contact with the schools either as an intern, a substitute, a student teacher, an aide, a volunteer, or a former student. Indeed, one principal, commenting about recruitment said "they come to me," thus suggesting a reactive rather than proactive posture. It appears, therefore, that although the intent is to be more proactive, the passive stance that typified the recruitment process before the new system continues.

It is also evident that the intended goal of incorporating recruitment and selection into an induction system has yet to be fully achieved. Recruitment is passive. Selection has involved teacher participation only in interviews and recommendations. The core staffs at the three schools all report wishing to have a more elaborate process, one that would place considerable importance on demonstration teaching; however, they also indicate that the time involved would be prohibitive.

Aside from selection not being fully developed at this point, the new teachers report that their induction to the respective schools emphasized policies and procedures more than goals, expectations, or teaching practices, and that the "buddy" system is at best haphazard. The new teachers were pleased with the interviews and perceived no difficulties with other aspects of the comprehensive system, including peer observation. In a sense, then, it may be that Durham County schools' effort to be comprehensive in its personnel development system has detracted from efforts to fully develop the recruitment, selection, and socialization components.

The Durham County initiative has involved senior teachers in the recruitment and selection processes and had led to some shared decisionmaking between the principals and some teachers (members of core staffs). The principals all reported that the efforts of the core staffs in these processes led the principal to have more faith in the decisionmaking capabilities of the teachers. The core staffs also reported that, given their involvement in recruitment and selection, they felt they had more "invested" in the new teachers. As a result, these teachers saw it as their responsibility to see that the new hirees succeed in the classroom.

In this case, teacher involvement does seem to have engendered a sense of shared responsibility for the success of new teachers. However, new teachers are less likely to perceive this investment. Whether this is because of their lack of comparable experiences or the absence of overt and active support is not clear.

A FURTHER DESCRIPTION AND A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION

Given the mixed review we have provided regarding the degree to which the Durham County system of recruitment and selection is presently achieving its intended goals, one could easily conclude that what is going on in Durham County is no more or no less well developed than what is going on in many school districts throughout the nation. A naive observer who entered the Durham County School System and who was unaware of the numerous position papers, committee meetings, planning sessions, and training sessions over the last four years would be unlikely to observe empirically anything in the recruitment and selection process that was unusual, exemplary, or particularly innovative. But, there is, we think, something quite different going on.

What the Durham County schools seem to be attempting is to fundamentally restructure the way practicing teachers and administrators think about and behave toward personnel issues, especially at the building level. What has transpired to date, we believe, is a long-term staff development program aimed at increasing teacher and administrator awareness of the nature of personnel management and its linkage to the improvement of school performance. Indeed, the three schools all reported that only a small portion of time and resources allotted to the comprehensive system was spent on recruitment and selection (typically about $1,500 out of about $30,000).

As late as September 1983, a position paper dealing with the recruitment and selection of professional personnel ended with the following statement:

> The members of the review and study site teams will, in effect, need to go to school together as teachers and learners. This is essential if we hope to move to the level of analysis which is critical to conceptualizing a recruitment and selection system which is consistent with our stated goals.

Viewed as a staff development effort intended to raise awareness regarding issues of teacher selection and retention and other personnel management issues in schools, the Durham County initiative has moved quite effectively. One cannot read the minutes of the planning committees without being impressed with the increasing sophistication of principals and Central Office staff in addressing various personnel and general school management functions. Indeed, some of the position papers could be published in refereed journals.

Our preliminary assessment then is that although Durham County has not really addressed the problem of recruiting qualified applicants, it has had some teacher participation in the selection process. The Durham

County experience suggests that by using recruitment and selection as the initial force for developing a comprehensive personnel management system, one can enhance the awareness, involvement, knowledge, and technical competence of senior teachers regarding these issues. By having senior teachers directly involved in stating what they expect of beginning teachers (and implicitly of themselves) and how beginning teachers should support and evaluate (and implicitly how they should also be supported and evaluated), it may be possible to reduce resistance to some forms of staff development. Furthermore, by assigning teachers to special roles and status (e.g., core staff), it may be possible for school systems to move toward a pattern of differentiated staffing associated with differential rewards and status, without engendering a great deal of resistance.

CONCLUSION

The RAND Corporation selected the Durham County School System as a site for study because this school system was judged to have a fully developed personnel management system, especially in the areas of recruitment and selection. This case study leads us to the conclusion that the judgment was not altogether justified. Conceptually, as revealed in position papers, minutes, etc., the Durham County system is well developed. In our experience, few systems have available to them such comprehensive and sophisticated statements about how personnel management can and should occur.

The difficulty facing Durham County is translating these ideas into practice and policy. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that the unifying notions that undergird the Durham County system, as it is conceptualized, are often antithetical to the strong value principals placed on decentralization and the maintenance of their relative autonomy. Whether the personnel development system, including recruitment and selection, that has been conceptualized for Durham County will, in fact, become operational in all schools in the system depends, we believe, on two conditions: (a) whether and how the district resolves the dilemma of centralization versus decentralization, and (b) the willingness of the present superintendent to give the comprehensive system high priority.

In effect, what the Durham County School District has developed is a mechanism of encouraging and supporting local schools to develop individual comprehensive personnel development systems. For those who are convinced that the building level is the most important place to develop change in schools, the Durham County program should continue to be of high interest. For those who are looking to a unitary or exemplary response to how school systems might more effectively recruit and select new teachers, the Durham County case is less interesting.